



Project News: Support to Rural Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade in Papua New Guinea (EU-STREIT PNG)

October 2021 - Issue #8



FAO staff distributing cocoa seedling among the beneficiaries in East Sepik Province.

UNJP/PNG/010/EC

In this issue:

- Technical support to benefit 2000 cocoa and vanilla families
- Promoting economic independence through agriculture among the youth
- Providing technical assistance to 1,418 cocoa and vanilla lead farmers
- Urging youth engagement in transforming agriculture food systems
- Partnership to strengthen 1000 local agri-business groups
- Addressing gender equality and gender-based violence
- Supporting PNG to boost quality cocoa exports
- Training 749 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in cocoa and vanilla cultivation
- Upskilling government fisheries officers
- Raising awareness on crucial women's role in household wellbeing
- Developing the capacity among rural women and youths
- Visit by DNPM officials
- Conducting fish farming training for inland farmers
- Observing World Environment Day 2021
- Empowering rural communities to get secure the access to markets

By Dr Xuebing Sun, the EU-STREIT PNG Programme Coordinator

Providing technical assistance to support transforming agri-food system

Sustainability of programme results is a priority of the EU-STREIT PNG for partner agencies, i.e. European Union, UN implementing agencies and national partners. To realise the expected transformative changes in the identified three value chains, i.e. Cocoa, Vanilla and Fisheries, the EU-STREIT PNG has been implementing programmatic approach to strengthen local systems, with an aim of improving policy process, marketing process and social process, and has achieved tangible and promising outputs. Building on experiences and lessons learned, the EU-STREIT PNG will continuously fine tune its approaches and the implementing mechanism to better service this purpose.

Over the last few months, this EU Funded UN Joint STREIT Programme, in partnership with local, provincial and national institutions, continues to lend its expertise and technical assistance to the engaged farmers, rural communities, agri-business partners and government authorities to develop their capacities further to render more efficient practices in the production, processing, and marketing of and policy-making for the three target cocoa, fisheries, and vanilla agri-food value chains.

In this respect, the EU-STREIT PNG Programme provided learning opportunities for thousands of master farmers, trained and enabled them as Trainers of Trainers to spread further and share the advanced knowledge, skills and best practices with broader communities.

The EU-STREIT PNG Programme also paid particular attention to address gender- and youth-related challenges, including gender-based violence and gender and youth exclusion, through engaging farming communities, as well as close collaboration with governmental and educational entities to promote and advocate for gender equality, women's empowerment, and youth inclusion along all nodes of agri-business value chains.

To develop innovative solutions, the Programme started fostering its engagement with research institutions of the country, including the National Fisheries College and the New Guinea Binatang Research Centre.

This EU Funded UN Joint Programme also pressed with its plans to strengthen and improve the value chain business enabler environment and infrastructure efficiency. It includes initiating the man-labour powered road maintenance and rehabilitation programme. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG Programme provides technical support to benefit 2000 cocoa and vanilla families in East Sepik Province

EU-STREIT PNG on a recent mission to Ambunti-Drekikier District trained 200 lead farmers to act as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) on advanced cocoa cultivation practices and efficient vanilla production techniques.

The FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme, in Papua New Guinea in collaboration with Provincial DAL and Cocoa Board in East Sepik Province, conducted two trainings on 'Cocoa Bud Grafting' and 'Vanilla Cultivation, Husbandry and Processing' that will benefit 2 000 plus rural farm-dependant households in East Sepik Province.

Building on previous technical assistance provided by the EU-STREIT PNG in August 2021, the Programme continued with another technical assistance to Hambini Village in early September 2021.

A total of 200 lead farmers, including a high number of women and female youth, took part in the first 2-day training on 'Cocoa Bud Grafting'. The participants are expected to act as Trainers for other members of their community and impart the gained knowledge and skills to at least 10 farmers in their cluster groups, hence benefiting 2 000 people in the Hambini community.

The training was aimed at enabling cocoa farmers to replace old cocoa trees, including those affected by cocoa pod borer (CPB) pest, which has resulted in low production and loss in income for countless rural households.

Bud grafting is the latest innovative technique in cocoa cultivation which EU-STREIT PNG is promoting along with the distribution of 18 CPB tolerant species – recommended by the national Cocoa Board – among cocoa farming communities in the Sepik Region.

For the farmers, it was an awakening, learning opportunity they have been waiting for many years. "We know cocoa pod borer pest is the issue and the only way to address it is to rehabilitate with new cocoas. Through this programme, the EU-STREIT PNG, we can now be able to produce good quality cocoa to attract better markets," said 62-year-old Michael Butehe, an active cocoa farmer and an elder in the village.



Michael Butehe, an active cocoa farmer and an elder in Hambini Village.

Shedding tears, the old-timer described EU-STREIT PNG as an intervention that will unfold a brighter future for his people. "We are cultivating cocoa, but who will come and teach us how to cultivate and produce quality beans properly, but today the FAO through EU-STREIT PNG and PNG Cocoa Board is assisting us in moving forward from where we are," added Mr Butehe.

The same 200 participants continued for another 2-day vanilla training on proper cultivation, husbandry and processing methods on 9-10 September. One highlight of the training was the introduction of a simple, efficient technique to pollinate vanilla flowers. The technique only requires lifting the rostellum, which acts as a shield between the stamen and stigma, and then pressing the stamen with the thumb gently down to the stigma for successful pollination.

"The advantage of this method is the speed and accuracy of pollinating vanilla flowers in the morning between 6:30 am to 10:30 am, which is the best time for pollination," explained the FAO National Vanilla Production Officer and Training Facilitator Mr Nanda Siri.

All participants had the opportunity to practice this pollination technique during practical sessions and picked up the skills very quickly. "With this new knowledge, I can now do pollination well to produce good quality beans for a higher income to support my children's school fees," said Lois Sambrehel, a single mum with three teenage children.

These trainings are aimed to fill in the knowledge gaps farmers have in the production process. These 200 lead vanilla farmers are expected to pass the technique they mastered to at least 2 000 vanilla farmers in the area.

The EU-STREIT PNG Programme continues to guide, mentor and work closely with the farmers, supporting them to increase both the quality and quantity of vanilla beans they produce. ■



A young lady from Hambini Village, practicing cocoa bud grafting.

FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG Programme promotes 'economic independence through agriculture' among rural youth populations

The EU-STREIT PNG partners with local educational bodies to mainstream gender and youth perspectives into the cocoa, vanilla and fisheries value chains among future generations of Papua New Guinea.

In a bid to empower the females and youths along all nodes of agricultural value chains, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under the EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea partnered with a local educational institution to promote and advocate for embracing agriculture as a promising profession by the rural females and youths.

As part of its broad-based partnership with local stakeholders, FAO collaborated with the Bishop Leo Secondary School during a 2-day cultural event, held on the occasion of PNG independence, to mainstream gender perspectives and youth inclusion in agri-food value chains and to demonstrate how using efficient knowledge and skills in agriculture can result in quantity and quality production.

Officiating on the first day of the event on behalf of the FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme, Ms Patu Shang, the FAO Gender and Youth Inclusion Specialist, explained to the attending pupils the importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives and youth inclusion in this rural agriculture development programme.

"25 percent of the PNG's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from agriculture. We can increase this contribution by encouraging the youth, who make up 60 percent or 7.3 million of the population, to take part in agriculture. This is the focus of the EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea to ensure agriculture is for everybody, including the poor, the parents and the youth," said Ms Patu.

To mark this occasion, demonstrations were carried out by EU-STREIT PNG officers on cocoa bud grafting, vanilla pollination and fish feed formulation, which attracted many



Ms Patu Shang, the FAO Gender and Youth Inclusion Specialist, addresses the pupils during the ceremony.

enthusiastic students.

"I learned something here today; I learned that one successful pollination can give rise to more than one vanilla bean. My mum and dad are vanilla farmers so, I can pass on the knowledge to my parents on our vanilla garden," said Grace, a Grade 11 female student.

The second day was marked by colourful displays of traditional costumes and dances and songs typifying the customs and traditions from the different districts of the provinces of Papua New Guinea. The participants also witnessed the presentation of a grass cutter and knapsack sprayer pump by EU-STREIT PNG to male and female students who were singled out as the top-performing Grade 12 pupils in some agriculture related subjects.

"The purpose of this academic award was to encourage students and youth who are the future of this country to embrace agriculture as a profession. Agriculture is not only for the poor and the old parents but equally for the youth because they are the future, and agriculture is the backbone of the PNG economy, especially in the rural area," explained Ms Shang.

In his speech at the event, the Governor of East Sepik Province, Mr Allan Bird, also urged the students to take the lead in agriculture in their communities.

Highlighting the FAO contribution to the event, the Governor said: "I want you to do something better in your life. The FAO team has demonstrated to you how to do cocoa budding, and I'm sure you have learned something new that can help better your community." ■



Mr Allan Bird, The East Sepik Governor, addresses the attendees during the ceremony.

FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG provides technical assistance to 1,418 cocoa and vanilla lead farmers in 9 remote villages in Sandaun Province, who will further train 14,000 farmers

EU-STREIT PNG to rehabilitate old cocoa trees, including those affected by cocoa pod borer pest, conducted 6 cocoa bud grafting and block management trainings for 1 061 lead farmers in Aitape East and West LLGs, and equipped 357 lead farmers with a new vanilla pollination technique in 6 villages in remote area.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in line with its mission and objectives of the EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea, conducted 12 trainings for farmers in Sandaun Province who are earning a life from cocoa and vanilla.

With focuses on transferring the important knowledge, techniques and skills and enhancing and institutionalizing the extension service at community level, the Technical Assistance mission delivered Training of Trainers (ToTs) to 1 418 cocoa and vanilla lead farmers in 9 remote villages in the Province. It included transferring advance knowledge, techniques and skills in cocoa propagation and the integrated pest and disease management to 1 061 lead farmers. The mission also equipped 357 vanilla lead farmers with the requisite knowledge and the efficient techniques in vanilla cultivation, husbandry, harvesting and processing.

These ToTs have also enabled the participants to act as Trainers in their vicinity and to impart the acquired knowledge, skills and techniques to over 14 000 farmers in the Sepik Region.

"In collaboration with Cocoa Board and Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) officers in Aitape-Lumi District, we were able to select the farmers from 100 plus cluster groups including women and youth to attend as potential trainers for the follow-up trainings. The participants will practice in their blocks, and in the process will train at least 10 others in their community, so this important life skill is shared with others," explained by the National Cocoa Production Officer, Michael Lames, who facilitated these capacity building trainings.

Bud grafting or cocoa propagation is the latest innovation in cocoa farming that EU-STREIT PNG is promoting, along with the distribution of 18 CPB tolerant species – recommended by the national Cocoa Board – among rural communities in the Greater Sepik Region. This targeted training enables the farmers to replace and rehabilitate old cocoa trees affected by the cocoa pod borer (CPB) pest – resulting in low production and loss in income for thousands of rural families.

For many farmers, it was their first time to acquire new knowledge and skills to improve their cocoa blocks. "My brothers and I want to replace CPB affected cocoa trees with cloned ones that will give us more pods and money after 2-3 years, so I'm excited," said Rosa Albert, who was among the 75 women out of 150 participants of training in Poro.

The training at Poro also covered cocoa block management for additional two days, and Awareh Trade Ltd, in collaboration with EU-STREIT PNG, commenced distribution of CPB tolerant seedlings.

A farmer received 50 seedlings for rehabilitation of old blocks and 306 each for demonstration blocks. The first recipient was a 28-year-old female farmer, Anita Moipo. "I heard of EU-STREIT PNG coming and have organised some boys to clean our old cocoa block. I'm excited to replace the old trees with these new seedlings. With more cocoa pods and an increase in income, I want to build a house for my mother," said Anita.

Two similar trainings on Cocoa Block Management were conducted in Ulau and Suian villages, respectively. A total of 300 farmers, including 135 women and 23 youths, from 100 plus cluster groups attended the three trainings, which include theory and practical demonstration on pruning methods and the timing to apply them to the cocoa block.

Meanwhile, a recent vanilla mission into Vanimo Green District of Sandaun Province, with the assistance of Sandaun Provincial and Vanimo Green District DAL, reached out to 357 vanilla farmers from 60 plus cluster groups in the rural villages of Amanab Bewani Wutung Onei, Green River and Walsa LLGs.

The farmers were shown the simplest and the most proper vanilla pollination techniques as well as appropriate knowledge and techniques of vanilla cultivation, husbandry and processing (curing).

It was a privilege for the rural farmers to take part in formal training. Many are self-taught and have been cultivating and processing their beans based on field experiences and self-evaluation.

"We are here to fill in the knowledge gaps you have in the production process and will guide and work closely with you to produce sufficient quantity with the best quality," the National Vanilla Production Officer, Nanda Siri, told a group of farmers during a session in rural Vanimo.

The simple pollination technique shared with the farmers is by lifting the rostellum, which acts as a shield between the stamen and stigma, and by pressing the stamen with the thumb gently down to the stigma for a successful pollination.

"The advantage of this method is the speed and accuracy to pollinate all vanilla flowers in the morning between 6:30 am to 10:30 am," explained Mr Siri. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG urges youth engagement in transforming agriculture food systems

EU-STREIT PNG joins hands with local communities in Papua New Guinea to celebrate International Youth Day with a message to engage youth in agriculture food systems thereby reducing rural poverty and crime rate.

The European Union funded Support to Rural Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade Programme in Papua New Guinea (EU-STREIT PNG) celebrated International Youth Day with a reminder to us all that youth power is part of an overall strength of a country, hence they must be engaged as agents of change in the agriculture food systems.

“Building on transforming food systems encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and food industries. Young people in Papua New Guinea are change agents, who contribute to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals, who can cope with changes and contribute to the realization of the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization’s goal of leaving no one behind,” said Dr Xuebing Sun, Programme Coordinator in his keynote address.

He added: “It is vital to scale-up innovation in agriculture while producing in a more sustainable way for the people and the planet. EU-STREIT programme focuses on youth inclusion as one of the main avenues to encourage youth to take up agriculture as a profession and thereby reduce rural poverty and crime rate. It has been acknowledged that there is a need for inclusive support mechanisms that ensure youth continue to amplify efforts collectively and individually to restore the planet and protect life, while integrating biodiversity in the transformation of food systems through the EU STREIT Programme. I cordially invite all of you to join hands with EU STREIT PNG Programme to contribute to realization of our common goal of “Increasing sustainable and inclusive economic development of rural areas in Sepik Region and in Papua New Guinea. I strongly believe that with your talents, innovation, enthusiasm, commitment, and determination, we can make a difference together! Transforming the food systems with your innovation for Human and Planetary health, and for a wealthy Sepik and Papua New Guinea!”.

Dr. Sun shared this important reminder and extended his cordial invite to the youth in his keynote address to over 200 youth, men and women who gathered at Sir Michael Thomas Somare Stadium in Wewak, East Sepik Province to celebrate the International Youth Day 2021.

The theme of International Youth Day 2021 which falls on August 12 as promoted by the United Nations is “Transforming Food Systems – Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health” and in East Sepik the occasion was



Students competes in the Cocoa Bud Grafting Contest, held on the occasion of International Youth Day.

celebrated on Wednesday 18.

The purpose of this event was to acknowledge and celebrate transformation of food systems through youth innovation, healthy, sustainable and environmentally safe practice.

Under this FAO-led Programme, the EU-STREIT PNG facilitates youth’s future active participation in agricultural activities, helping them to find an interest and, be prepared to become future agripreneurs, farmers and leaders so that their voices, actions, initiatives and, engagement can be meaningfully recognised.

The event was successfully co-facilitated by the EU-STREIT PNG Gender & Youth Inclusion officers and HELP Resources a local NGO with support from officers from UN agencies, namely International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Development Programme (UNDP).

In his speech, the representative of the East Sepik Governor’s Office, in the person of the Executive Officer Charles Kaprangi challenged the youth and students to refrain from alcohol and drugs.

A Quiz for All on agriculture-related topics, a Panel Discussion by six students from the three selected schools, and a Cocoa Bud Grafting Contest, were some highlights of the celebrations. All three schools were presented with a wheel barrow and gardening tools like rake, bush knife and spades as consolation prizes.

The event helped the students to learn something new outside of the classroom. “I’m really happy to celebrate the International Youth Day with fellow students. It’s really important to us because we’re the future leaders of this country,” said student Ralista Wavewa of Yarapos Mercy Secondary. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea expands the partnership to establish and strengthen 1000 local agri-business groups in the Sepik Region

EU-STREIT PNG joins the hands with local authorities in the Papua New Guinea to further promote agri-entrepreneurship and facilitate transformative changes in agriculture and food systems.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) enters into a partnership with the Wewak Small Enterprise Promotion Centre (WSEP Centre) to promote agri-entrepreneurship, provide business trainings and establish business groups in the Sepik Region.

According to a Letter of Agreement signed on 12 August 2021 between FAO and WSEP Centre under the European Union-funded Programme for Support to Rural Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade in Papua New Guinea (EU-STREIT PNG), this partnership, through providing capacity building opportunities, aims to support and facilitate the development of small agri-business enterprises in East Sepik and Sandaun Provinces.

In the framework of this partnership, EU-STREIT PNG supports WSEP Centre to conduct business management and corporate trainings for 1 000 executives of agri-rural cooperatives and small business groups in the Sepik Region, and empower them to effectively lead their cooperatives and business groups to increase economic returns.

In this respect, in collaboration with Small and Medium Enterprises Cooperation and with support of EU-STREIT PNG, 25 commerce extension officers and 30 champion local agripreneurs from both provinces will receive trainings on Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) to impart the requisite business knowledge and skills to the target 1 000 lead members. WSEP Centre will also assist and train these lead members to formalise and officially establish their business groups.

As part of this LoA, EU-STREIT PNG assists the WSEP Centre in conducting a field assessment of business operations and mentoring entrepreneurs and supporting the Centre to establish a mentorship division.

"I am very happy today that we are signing the LoA with the WSEP Centre to further our collaboration to promoting the development of small enterprises in the Sepiks through capacity building. I hope that the momentum of the signing of LoA will be continued and sustained in future, and I strongly believe that our collaboration will effectively support the realisation of the government commitment in transforming agriculture and food systems and promoting agri-business development for the benefit of the people of Sepiks and the people of PNG," said Dr Xuebing Sun, the EU-STREIT Programme Coordinator, during the signing ceremony held at the Programme Office, in Wewak, East Sepik Province.

He further underscored that WSEPC Centre "as a



Left: Mr Noel Bafun, the WSEPC Centre Executive Officer; Right: Dr Xuebing Sun, the EU-STREIT PNG Programme Coordinator

government entity and also as a local business arm of the East Sepik Provincial Commerce and Industry Division, has the expertise and experience and a very good track of records in delivering a capacity building initiatives for small enterprises and business groups," adding that "Partnership is essential for the EU-STREIT Programme, it is an excellent opportunity to join hands in terms of promoting the real transformative changes and I do believe that WSEP Centre is a right partner for EU-STREIT PNGs."

"The best way to secure the sustainability of achieved results is to institutionalise the introduced methodology, capacity, technical packages into the local system. That matters to both private systems and government systems," further highlighted by Dr Sun.

During the signing ceremony, Mr Noel Bafun, the WSEPC Centre Executive Officer, also expressed his appreciation of the approach taken by the Programme in partnering with local institutions. "Thank you for giving trust and confidence to us for partnership with EU-STREIT PNG on business training in East Sepik and Sandaun Provinces. We look forward to working with you to deliver outcomes."

"EU-STREIT PNG has a very strong focus on the transformation of traditional agriculture and food system not only in the Sepiks but also across the country that is a very big focus because, in addition to direct intervention activities, EU STREIT PNG also include action oriented policy elements, designed as an integral part of business enabler environment improvement pillar, which has nation-wide implications in terms of contributing to strengthening policy process and institutional capacities for the transformation of food and agriculture systems," said Dr Sun. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme addresses gender equality and gender-based violence, in support of the wellbeing of farming households in Sandaun Province

EU-STREIT PNG provides learning opportunities for rural families in Sandaun Province on gender-based violence and women and youth inclusion within agri-business activities, educating the members, including the men, to recognise, respect and value the women's participation in agricultural activities.

To promote further inclusive participation of rural women and youths in agri-food value chains in Papua New Guinea as a critical factor in collaboration to materialise the full potential for food security and eradication of poverty in rural communities, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under EU-STREIT PNG Programme presses on with its commitment to extend learning opportunities on mainstreaming gender perspective to farming communities and local stakeholders in the Sandaun Province.

Held in late July in the border province, the newest rounds of trainings under the theme Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Agrifood Chains offered by the Programme covered two major rural communities of Pasi DPI Station in the Vanimo Urban LLG and Waromo Village in the Bewani Wutung Onei LLG.

The trainings addressed the impact of gender-based violence along food value chains, financial literacy, the steps and processes in setting up cohesive women's and youth's business group as well as group dynamics.

In total, 84 farmers and Provincial DAL officers, including 24 women, benefitted from these learning and awareness-raising opportunities.

One of the participants was a young wife named Mrs Scolyn Wasa, who was brought up learning and practising women's traditional customary roles. "I'm happy to attend the workshop with my husband. I learned many new things like reproductive and productive roles that can be shared between men, women, youth and other members of the family," said Mrs Wasa.

"I now know my husband can help me in household daily works as we now understand the importance of sharing roles, and so there will be no argument in our home," she added.

For any improvement to take place in terms of the wellbeing of farming families, which is one of the main agenda of the EU-STREIT Programme, male farmers must learn and practice to recognise, respect and value the women and youth participation for all to benefit equally.

"In a house, there must be transparency, trust and mutual understanding between father, mother and other members to work in harmony in order to live a fruitful, prosperous life," said farmer Nicholas Tundu who attended the training. "As a village man, I'm happy I learnt new things that can help my family and I to earn money together, save it and not



EU-STREIT PNG Team conducts trainings on mainstreaming gender perspective to farming communities and local stakeholders in the Sandaun Province.

squander it." The financial literacy introduction complemented the gender training package with satisfactory feedback from the trainees.

The training was beneficial to DAL officers as well, like Ms Loretta Imba, the Officer in Charge for Bewani Wutung Onei LLG. "The concept of this training is good as it creates an awareness on gender-based violence. I will also impart this knowledge to farmers when doing my extension work and talking to the rural farmers on the importance of working together as a family," said Ms Imba.

Appreciating the support provided by the Programme, Mr Allan Mark, the Vanimo Green District Manager, said: "It's a privilege to have the EU-STREIT Programme here to promote agriculture in Sandaun Province. There are more challenges ahead and one of them is to equip our farmers to understand the negative impact of gender-based violence in the productivity of agri-value chain and how everybody can collectively take part under this programme."

Mr Steven Nikengu, the Bewani Wutung Onei LLG's Chair of Commerce and Agriculture, also in his remarks mentioned: "We have problems with funding to help our farmers, so I'm happy for this intervention by the EU-STREIT PNG to support us. We will work together to help our rural people."

Following the FAO Strategic Framework on leaving no one behind, this FAO-led EU-funded Programme particularly focused on including marginalised groups like widows, single parents, orphans and people living with disabilities (PLWD) in its training and capacity building workshops. The Programme will roll out similar trainings to other LLGs of the Sepik Region in the coming months. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme supports Papua New Guinea to boost quality cocoa exports

The EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea rolled out a capacity building training for cocoa quality control and assessors' experts, enabling them to contribute in securing a competitive advantage for this product in foreign markets.

To address outstanding cocoa quality production challenges in Papua New Guinea, the FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG Programme, in collaboration with the Cocoa Board, commenced rolling out of the first comprehensive eight-module Cocoa Assessors Training Program in the Sepik Region.

The first part of this training program, held in the third week of July in Wewak in East Sepik Province, pulled together 49 participants, including 10 women from various sections of the cocoa value chain. Participants comprise extension officers from Division of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), Cocoa Board and cocoa assessors representing dry bean exporters active in the area. Some model farmers/fermentary owners also attended the weeklong session conducted by three female facilitators from the quality section of the Cocoa Board Head Office in Kokopo, East New Britain Province.

The primary purpose of this training program is to address quality control issues by exporting companies and small fermentary owners. "They must have this knowledge to ferment, dry and produce quality cocoa, likewise for cocoa assessors in exporting operations, to know cocoa quality aspects to assess cocoa supplied by village farmers. Because our comparative edge in the world market is quality, and we must be able to control that," said Mr Daryl Worimo, the Sepik Cocoa Board Regional Manager.

Cocoa is an important source of income for about 500 000 people of the East Sepik and the Sandaun Provinces where the programme is being implemented.

For many of the participants, it was their first to learn about cocoa inspection regulations, requirements for registration of cocoa fermentaries, and proper cocoa drying and fermentation processes. Participants were also introduced to the Cocoa Act 1981, quality management systems, how different agencies are involved in the cocoa industry, hooking and breaking the cocoa pods, cocoa processing and PNG export standards.

Group discussions with field visits to model cocoa blocks and fermentary set-ups and exporters' processing facilities were



EU-STREIT PNG organises capacity building training for cocoa quality control and assessors' experts in the Sepik Region.

part of the weeklong training. Participants also learned how to produce chocolate from cocoa beans in their homes. "I believe that with these tailor-made trainings and the improved technical and management skills of the key players of the value chain, cocoa production capacity (quality and quantity) and financial return of cocoa farmers in PNG will be dramatically improved, and more and more farmers will benefit from cocoa sector and improve their livelihoods in a more sustainable way", said Dr Xuebing Sun, EU STREIT Programme Coordinator.

Appreciating the contribution of EU-STREIT PNG's to the development of the region, the East Sepik Governor, Hon. Allan Bird, in his remarks at this training, explained the importance of the EU-STREIT PNG Programme which is to generate cash flow for the rural economy through cash crops like cocoa and vanilla. "When we empower our people, the country will move. That's the power of things like cocoa. This is why I'm happy for the European Union with FAO and Cocoa Board to join because no single person can do it alone. We have to join hands to make big things happen, and I'm happy to see women participants here as well," said Mr Bird.

The EU-STREIT PNG's Programme Coordinator, Dr Xuebing Sun, also in his remarks underscored the fact that the Programme is here to join hands with local partners and other implementing agencies like exporters to drive the cocoa value chain in the Sepik Region, "the EU STREIT PNG is an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned program. I highly appreciate the great importance attached on the Programme by both the provincial governors and Provincial Administrations in Sepik. EU STREIT PNG and the government agencies will work more closely to further the alignments between EU STREIT PNG and the government priorities." ■



Participants of the Cocoa Assessors Training Program in Wewak, East Sepik Province.

EU-STREIT PNG extended its technical assistance to remote rural areas in West Sepik Province, trained 749 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in cocoa and vanilla cultivation

To provide sustainable technical support to the hard-accessible rural areas in Papua New Guinea, FAO under EU-STREIT PNG Programme trained 749 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in West Sepik Province, upscaling their knowledge and skills to mentor, guide and monitor an extended number of farmers on cocoa and vanilla cultivation's best practices in the region.

The EU-STREIT PNG Programme, further to its endeavour to empower families, women, and youths along cocoa and vanilla value chains, conducted a 12-day Technical Assistance (TA) mission starting from mid-June 2021, reaching out to the agriculture-dependent communities in the hinterlands of the West Sepik Province.

Focused on transferring technical expertise to the wider local population, the EU STREIT PNG TA mission organised multiple training sessions to build capacities among 749 farmers in the remote, hard-accessible areas, worked on upscaling their knowledge and skills to act as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs), enabling them to further extend, mentor, guide and monitor their fellows on cocoa and vanilla cultivation's best practices.

"ToT is a facilitating mechanism to offer sustainable and durable technical support to the communities that have limited access to resources and expertise," said Dr Rabi Rasaily, the FAO Senior Agriculture Officer, who led the TA mission. "With conducting follow up missions, assessing and offering complementary trainings, we can make sure that the knowledge and skills vested with ToTs, are institutionalised and are well accessible to the demanding people," he added.

"The objective is to help to cover a broader number of villages. ToTs aims to enable a limited number of attendees to take what they learn to their villages and communities and help their colleagues, neighbours and other farmers in their vicinity to adopt new cultivation techniques," said Dr Pavel Burian, Deputy Programme Coordinator for EU-STREIT PNG.



Mr Nanda Siri, the FAO National Vanilla Production Officer trains the vanilla farmers.

The trainings offered by the EU STREIT PNG TA mission include two main sections covering theory session to introduce the new concepts and methods, and hands-on demonstration to deepen the practices bestowed during theory sessions.

For vanilla cultivation, the EU STREIT PNG TA mission held learning sessions in four LLGs in Aitape/Lumi and Nuku districts in West Sepik Province. In total, 416 vanilla farmers, including 45 women and 141 youths, from 124 cluster groups received trainings which include the theory on vanilla cultivation, husbandry, harvesting and curing, as well as the practical demonstration on vanilla pollination, management and processing techniques.

Regarding cocoa, the EU STREIT PNG TA mission provided 333 farmers, including 40 women and 55 youths, from more than 100 cluster groups in three districts of Nuku, Aitape/Lumi and Vanimo/Green in the province, with the opportunities to learn and practice low-cost cocoa bud grafting techniques.

The EU-STREIT PNG, being implemented as a UN Joint Programme (FAO as leading agency, and ILO, ITU, UNCDF and UNDP as implementing partners), is the largest grant-funded Programme of the European Union in the country and the Pacific region, which focuses on increasing sustainable and inclusive economic development of rural areas through Increasing the economic returns and opportunities from cocoa, vanilla and fishery value chains and strengthening and improving the efficiency of value chain enablers including the business environment and supporting sustainable, climate-proof transport and energy infrastructure development. ■



EU-STREIT PNG trains cocoa farmers on advanced cocoa farming skills and techniques.

FAO under EU-STREIT PNG partners National Fisheries Authority to upskill government fisheries officers

EU-STREIT PNG supports the country to enhance further its capacity to offer quality extension services to local fisheries-dependant communities.

The FAO-Led EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea enters into a partnership with the PNG's National Fisheries Authority to upskill country's fisheries officers.

Under a Letter of Agreement (LoA) signed between Managing Director of National Fisheries Authority (NFA) Mr John Kasu and the FAO Country Head of Office, Mr Ken Shimizu, EU-STREIT PNG offers its support to upscale the knowledge and skills of 14 government fisheries officers through a 10-week training at the National Fisheries College (NFC) in Kavieng.

Ten of these officers have already commenced Certificate One Aquaculture training course which is on-going, while four will attend the Certificate Two Small Fishing Operations (SFO) training course to start in August 2021. The participants are from 10 districts of East and West Sepik provinces.

The major outputs of this collaboration are to build the capacity of officers in fisheries operations and aquaculture, enabling them to design and conduct training workshops and facilitate capacity building for fishery and aquaculture entrepreneurs. The initiative also equips the officers with understanding and skills to adopt appropriate extension tools, methods and techniques to conduct advisory and extension services to target beneficiaries.

The attendees also will receive training on how to sustain and enhance their technical capacity through continuous self-learning, knowledge resources available online and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer.

"These officers will return to their respective areas and will be able to service better our rural farmers to improve the quality of fish products for an increase in income to sustain their wellbeing, and also to enhance food security and nutrition at the household level," explains Mr Francisco Noble, EU-STREIT PNG International Fisheries Specialist.

Two participants under this support are Junnel Yendo, 27, and Philemon Maino, 32, both from Yangoru-Saussia District, East Sepik Province. "So far the training is very helpful and I'm learning a lot. After completing my training, I will be able to impart these skills and knowledge to the farmers" says Mr Maino. "One main problem face by our farmers is the lack of technical know-how in fish farming, thus, after completing this training I can be able to impart to my farmers the skills and knowledge to help my farmers improve their fish husbandry," adds Ms Yendo.

Fish has nutritious value in terms of protein supplement to rural communities and is one of three value chains with cocoa and vanilla supported under this European Union-



PNG's provincial fisheries officers attend the intensive trainings facilitated by the EU-STREIT PNG programme.

funded Programme.

The focus of EU-STREIT PNG under this component is on inshore & riverine fishing and aquaculture. This intervention aims to serve a dual diversification enterprise development as well as ensuring food security and nutrition. To achieve these goals, the Programme trains the local fishers and works on increasing fishing efficiency and returns, establishing fisheries cold chains, setting up hatcheries, improving feeding management and promoting fisher marketing collectives (in particular women's groups). ■

EU-STREIT's workplan to further strengthen fish value chain in the Greater Sepik Region

- Conducting fishery value chain studies and collecting baseline data.
- Building the capacity to establish fisheries information and marketing systems.
- Supporting smallholder aquaculture and fisher households to improved their income as well as food and nutrition security.
- Enhancing post-harvest processing, market access.
- Supporting climate-proof aquaculture and fisheries systems.
- Promoting nutrient-rich diets including fish and fish-based products in fishers households.
- Mainstreaming women and youth participation in fisheries value chain.

EU-STREIT PNG focuses on crucial women's roles in household wellbeing

EU-STREIT PNG takes step forward to raise awareness on gender-based violence amongst cocoa, vanilla and fisheries communities in East Sepik Province, and to economic empowerment and gender balance in decision making at the household and community level.

Women play a crucial role in the wellbeing of a family like in household income, food security and nutrition, said an official from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Papua New Guinea.

Dr Xuebing Sun, Programme Coordinator for the FAO-led European Union-funded Programme for Support to Rural Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade Programme in PNG (EU-STREIT PNG) was sharing this undeniable observation during a recent training workshop for cocoa, vanilla and fish farming families in Wewak District, East Sepik Province.

"Limited access by women to knowledge, finance and production skills has a strong negative impact on agricultural production, food security and family well-being," said Dr Sun.

The Programme Coordinator in his official opening remarks said for FAO this has been a hugely important opportunity to spotlight the connection between empowerment of women and food and nutrition security with rural development which compels us to look at these three issues together."

"In the rural areas of the developing world, poverty and domestic conflicts are closely related to the agricultural cycle and food insecurity. Although every situation is different, there are common patterns to be seen like limited access by women to key information on finance literacy, production skills and other vital knowledge that has a strongly negative impact on agricultural production, food security and family well-being. But we know that change is possible, and change is what we must promote," said Dr Sun.

The Programme Coordinator also acknowledged the Provincial Administration of East Sepik Province for supporting this important gender and youth inclusion



Participants of the EU-STREIT PNG's organised event to raise awareness on gender-based violence amongst farming communities.

training and in attendance to officiate at the opening was Jeffrey Yawi, Planning Manager who reflected on the close partnership with EU-STREIT PNG and East Sepik Provincial Administration to achieve National and Provincial Government. He said there is much greater need to increase gender equality and eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) in families and thank FAO as the lead implementing agency to address these problems in the Sepik.

This is the second training under the theme "Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives into Agri-food Value Chains", which brought together 26 participants including 16 women in a 3-day training workshop on Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 June 2021, at the Sepik Centre of Hope in Wewak town.

Purpose of the training workshop was to raise awareness on gender-based violence amongst cocoa, vanilla and fisheries communities, and to promote economic empowerment and gender balance in decision making for individuals at the household and community level.

"We can't change the mindset in one training but under the EU-STREIT PNG Programme, continuous awareness for youth and gender inclusion is critical and this is where we know that change is possible, and change is what we must promote," says Programme's Gender and Youth Inclusion officers Abbisa Maniapu and Zilpah Yahamani. "Gender is cross-cutting and when people are gender sensitized, family is intact and development takes place," they added.

The training workshop on mainstreaming gender perspective in the agrifood value chain covered financial literacy, the steps and processes in setting up women's and youth's business group, as well as group dynamics, gender awareness and issues of gender-based violence within the three value chains as key training content.

The training will roll out to other districts of East and West Sepik Province as well. ■



EU-STREIT PNG promote women economic empowerment and gender balance in decision making at the household and community level.

The man is wearing a blue polo shirt with 'SRELT' on the sleeve, a blue baseball cap, and a light blue surgical mask. He is holding a small, colorful woven bag. The poster behind him has the following text and graphics:

- Logos: United Nations, Papua New Guinea, and the European Union.
- Text: 'CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION'.
- Large text: 'STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF SMALLHOLDERS'.
- Text in Tok Pisin: 'SAPOT LONG TRED', 'AKAO', 'MEN', 'hila na pis'.
- Graphics: Icons of a fish, a plant, and a person.

The EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea, in collaboration with the Foundation for Women in Agriculture Development (FOWIAD), moves forward with its plans to build capacity among local cocoa farmers in the Sepik Region, providing them with skills and inputs to establish and run sustainable and competitive cocoa cultivation.

Together with FOWIAD, the EU-STREIT provides the farmers with learning opportunities, including hands-on training and field demonstrations to begin and complete rehabilitation work on their existing cocoa blocks. Each farmer was trained on chupon budding and replanting. They were equally equipped with the requisite land preparation skills for planting new seedlings. Furthermore, the Programme procured and distributed 36,544 improved clone cocoa seedlings to the farmers.

Besides, out of the ten demonstration blocks the Programme aims to establish in the target villages, five have already been set up, and the trainings have effectively begun. The demonstration blocks serve as a learning centre for the surrounding cocoa farmers to adopt the best practices on their individual blocks.

Focused on the inclusion of women and youths, this initiative works on transforming the agricultural sector in the eyes of the youths, making it attractive, viable and offering real and gainful self-employment opportunities for the teeming PNG youths leading to a change in attitudes and a reduction in rural exodus. This will invariably direct, educate, motivate, and inspire other youths to venture into agriculture, which holds the true key to national wealth. With particular emphasis on female youths, this partnership will also lead to more empowerment as well as agency and better participation of the female gender in family financial decision making. ■

DNPM officials pay a visit to the FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG running activities in the Sepik Region

PNG's officials hail the support extended by the EU STREIT PNG to the local farmers in the Sepik Region, emphasising the Programme is a strategic venture for the Government of Papua New Guinea.



DNPM delegation pays a visit to the Greater Sepik Region and inspects the EU-STREIT PNG Programme's activities in the area.

A delegation of Papua New Guinea's Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM) conducts a 5-day monitoring visit to Sepik Region, inspecting the EU STREIT PNG activities being implemented in the Region. During the monitoring mission, the delegation met with EU STREIT PNG Team, Provincial Administration, service providers and direct beneficiaries, and discussed key issues with key stakeholders on the ground.

Appreciating the hard work delivered by the UN Partner agencies in the framework of the EU-funded STREIT Programme, the DNPM Monitoring Mission Leader, Mr Jacob Areman, Assistant Secretary at DNPM, in his remarks during the wrap-up meeting, underscored that it is important to hear directly from the beneficiaries and farmers about their views on the Programme and how the program has been supporting them.

Likewise, he further said, "community participation is important for the Programme's success; everything is about farmers, and we need to spend more time with the farmers."

Mr Areman acknowledged the good progress made by the Programme, particularly in cocoa and vanilla value chains and infrastructure development sections (roads improvement and maintenance) in the different corners of the Region. "We saw the progress is happening on the

ground, and coordination and partnership between the provinces and the EU STREIT PNG are further strengthened," he added. Mr Areman called on further alignments between the Provincial Priorities and EU STREIT PNG, and advised both Provincial Administration and EU STREIT to take tangible steps to further enhance coordination and cooperation at technical levels through establishing institutionalised mechanisms.

With support from the EU STREIT PNG Team, the mission covered paying a visit to multiple implementations sites where the Programme keeps up with its commitment to implement activities envisaged to further support the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agri-business practices in both East Sepik and Sandum Provinces. It includes the renovated Fisheries Office and Ice Plant in Vanimo; Wutung Market Facility on the border of Indonesia; Vanilla farm in Waromo village in BWO LLG; Passi-Krisa-Osol Road's improvement; PDAL extension service centre in Pasi; Yawasoro Niiengwanje Road's improvements; Drone Survey, Penjikovi Women Agriculture Group, Ward 24, Yawasoro; Wewak Rural LLG's training, nursery and budwood garden site; Hawain nursery and resource centre; Wilmom Agro Farming Business Group and the Wewak Rural LLG's Cocoa and Vanilla training, nursery and Bud wood garden site. ■

The EU-STREIT PNG conducts first fish farming training for inland farmers in Yangoru-Saussia District

The EU-STREIT PNG equips the local fish farmers in Yangoru-Saussia District with the requisite knowledge and skills on tilapia fish farming and how to manage and clean fisheries facilities properly.



EU-STREIT PNG Programme organises fisheries farming trainings in Yangoru-Saussia District, East Sepik Province.

The EU-STREIT PNG, as part of its Fisheries component, conducts its first Inland Fisheries farming training workshop at the Yangoru-Saussia District from 1 to 5 June 2021.

Held at the Catholic Mission Hall with pulling together 15 farmers, including four women from Numbo, Sasowia, East and West Yangoru LLGs, the training focuses on the advantages of tilapia fish farming, the biology and life cycle of tilapia, fingerlings stocking, how to produce fish feed from readily available ingredients, fish farm management, book-keeping and handling/harvesting of mature fish with integrated fish and poultry farming.

Leading the training, the EU-STREIT Fish Specialist, Mr Francisco Noble, explains the benefits of tilapia fish farming and why it is being encouraged by the Programme. “The tilapia has a stable supply and demand; it is a top consumer choice with a steady growth pattern and can provide a good return for the farmers in terms of revenue.”

The training includes practical sessions where participants visited some fish ponds in the district and were shown how to clean and maintain these ponds properly. The weekly and monthly cleaning of the ponds is necessary to ensure the health of the fishes and plants and the quality of water coming into the pond.

Appreciating the support extended by the EU-STREIT PNG, participants express their hope to manage their fish facilities

properly, thanks to the skills training provided by the Programme. “I really appreciate what I learned and will transfer this knowledge to my siblings and others in the community on how to manage our ponds properly because fish is an important source of protein for wellbeing”, a female attendee said, adding, “We want more of such trainings to come to the villages but also want fish farming tools to motivate us to rehabilitate our fishing ponds.”

According to the District Agriculture Officer, Mr William Neimani, an earlier survey established that there are 113 inland fish farmers in the district. “We’re grateful for EU and FAO to choose Yangoru-Saussia as the first district for such opportunities to offer life skills and knowledge to our rural people. We want this partnership to continue for our other farmers to take part as well,” he added.

The EU-STREIT PNG, being implemented as a UN Joint Programme (FAO as leading agency, and ILO, ITU, UNCDFP and UNDP as implementing partners), is the largest grant-funded Programme of the European Union in the country and the Pacific region, which focuses on increasing sustainable and inclusive economic development of rural areas through Increasing the economic returns and opportunities from cocoa, vanilla and fishery value chains and strengthening and improving the efficiency of value chain enablers including the business environment and supporting sustainable, climate proof transport and energy infrastructure development. ■

EU-STREIT observed World Environment Day 2021 with Rural Sepik Students and Inland Fish Farmers

Contributing to the global efforts in raising awareness on World Environment Day, the FAO-led EU-STREIT Programme held an event for rural high school students in the Yangoru-Saussia district in East Sepik Province, highlighting the values of nature, reviewing the damages caused by human activities to natural resources and equipping young generation with knowledge and understanding to take responsibility to restore the ecosystem.

The theme for this year's World Environment Day, which is observed on 5 June annually across the globe, is "Ecosystem Restoration" and focuses on preventing, halting and reversing the damages caused to our planet's ecosystem.

In East Sepik, the European Union-funded Programme for Support to Rural Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade Programme in Papua New Guinea (EU-STREIT), took the campaign to 500 plus students of Yangoru Secondary on Thursday 4 June. The objective here was to ensure rural youth who are often left out in such United Nations events also appreciate the values of nature, so everyone takes responsibility to restore the ecosystem.

For EU-STREIT Programme, the occasion coincides with the first Inland Fish Farming Training held during the week at Yangoru Station; hence, 15 local male and female farmers also joined to observe the celebrations. Fisheries is one of the three food value chains EU-STREIT is supporting together with Cocoa and Vanilla to increase sustainable and inclusive economic development of rural areas in the Sepik Region.

In his keynote address, the EU-STREIT Programme Coordinator, Dr Xuebing Sun, explained the bleak status of the world ecosystem as a result of pollution and other human activities and the need to rehabilitate for future generations. "According to the UN, the world loses sufficient forest the size of a football pitch. Over the last century, we have destroyed half of the wetlands, and we have lost as much as 50 percent of our coral reefs. The situation we are facing now globally is very serious because the ecosystem affects the climate and the health of people. As long as the ecosystem is damaged, ourselves as human beings will be damaged. Hence your knowledge and understanding are important in various professions you will join later, like in science or as a lecturer at the University, to be aware of ecosystem restoration for the generations in the future," said Dr Sun.

The School Principal, Ms Lucy Gavalalu Silum, in her speech encouraged the students to reimagine and recreate to restore the damages to the ecosystem like river pollution and cutting down of trees in their respective hamlets or villages.

The awareness also focused on the effects of human-induced pollutants on water resources, aquatic ecosystems and fisheries, with particular attention to the damages caused by



Students attend the Programme's event to commemorate World Environment Day.

releasing detergent residue to freshwater resources and how it affected the quality and quantity of fish stock in aquatic freshwater ecosystems and consequently downturns livelihoods.

The highlight of the day was a quiz session on the planet's ecosystem and other significant issues related to environment and sustainable living where both male and female students confidently walked up to the stage to answer the questions and were presented with an EU-STREIT gift bag which includes a World Environment Day T-shirt.

Students were drilled on COVID-19 Safety Measures that must be observed in homes and communities, particularly on how to use facemasks properly so that it does not end up being a source of infection but a source of protection against the disease.

World Environment Day is one of the most significant events organised by the UN to generate awareness about the significance of nature. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as the lead implementing agency of this United Nations-Joint Programme, and in line with its objective to strengthen climate-resilient and more efficient value chain enablers, supports fostering sustainable development by focusing on the regulatory environment and discouraging unsustainable practices that cause irreversible damages to the environmental ecosystem.

Likewise, and as part of its advocacy and awareness-raising domain of activity, EU-STREIT Programme is providing the rural communities, including Cocoa, Vanilla and Fisheries farmers supported under the Programme, with training and public awareness opportunities on best practices and environmental sustainability. ■

FAO-led EU-STREIT PNG takes a step forward in empowering rural communities to secure farmers' access to agricultural markets

On 1 July 2021, EU-STREIT PNG starts and inaugurate routine road maintenance activities in Yawasoro-Niengwanje and Yarapi-Suambukau of East Sepik Province.

Further to the support extended by the EU-STREIT Programme in Papua New Guinea in providing an enabling environment and climate-proof transportation for the development of agri-business activities in the Sepik Region, the Programme sets a new milestone with the inauguration of the maintenance operation of 16 critical roads, totalling 248.10 KM, using the locally trained and recruited Road Maintenance Groups. The areas these networks of roads connect, have high production of Cocoa, Vanilla and Fisheries, and were struggling in having convenient, reliable access to markets.

Led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the road and infrastructure component of the EU-STREIT PNG is focused on upgrading roads, bridges, jetties and airstrips. This effort aims to help create an enabling environment for farmers to increase their income and profit with opportunities to participate in value-added markets to become agripreneurs under the three value chains supported by the Programme.

The ILO is engaging a labour-based road maintenance and rehabilitation programme by training and employing local people to engage them in routine maintenance and provide skilled manpower to contractor during the rehabilitation of these roads.

The routine maintenance refers to small maintenance works to be carried out in all seasons on a regular basis, comprising simple categories of maintenance works. The routine maintenance involves the cleaning, clearing and minor repair of different road elements to ensure that they work properly and avoid the damages occurred by rain and traffic. The associated advantage of routine maintenance is to restore the existing roads assets, ensure pliability, reduce accident, extend the time for scope of periodic and rehabilitation works and provide employment at local level.



EU-STREIT PNG established numerous Road Maintenance Groups in the Sepik Region.

In this regard, the ILO team under EU-STREIT PNG trained 126 people living in the villages traversed by the roads as members of local Road Maintenance Groups. The groups comprise 51 percent women and 49 percent men which includes 36 percent of youth, in respective villages and communities along the designated roads in 9 districts of East and West Sepik Provinces.

In establishing Road Maintenance Groups, the widows, single mothers, and the less fortunate people have been given an opportunity as well so they can become part of the programme. The programme successfully engages 9 percent of single mothers and 4 percent of widow as members of road maintenance group for implementation of routine maintenance. This is to ensure benefits are shared equally with everyone. "I see that it is not good for the men only to work on the road but us females too to promote gender equity and help our brothers fixing the roads with decent paid employment," said Claudia Yasaho, one of the trained and recruited female Road Maintenance Group members. Claudia is a mother of three children who joins other group's members taking part in the 6.5 km Munji-Haripmo road maintenance in the Sausso LLG of Yangoru-SSaussia District, East Sepik Province. ■

Contact information:

EU Funded UN Joint Programme Office
Email: streit-feedback@fao.org P
Website: <http://www.fao.org/papuanewguinea/streit-png/en>
Phone: +675 436 0121
Department of Agriculture and Livestock Compound
Wewak, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea



UNITED NATIONS
PAPUA NEW GUINEA



FUNDED BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/) licence