



Synergistic linkages between green trade and sustainable development in Papua New Guinea

Green trade for sustainable development in Pacific small island developing States of the Melanesian Spearhead Group

Technical cooperation outcome



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Acknowledgements

This report on synergistic linkages between green trade and sustainable development in Papua New Guinea was prepared by Julien Bliesener, Charline Depoorter, Seul Lee and Rupal Verma in the Trade Analysis Branch of the Division on International Trade and Commodities, UNCTAD.

The report benefited greatly from inputs and comments from Maria Semenova and Alexey Kravchenko of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Theresa Carpenter, Fabien Dumesnil, Saluja Gurdeep, Christian Knebel and Ralf Peters of UNCTAD. Desktop publishing and the cover were undertaken by Jenifer Tacardon-Mercado of UNCTAD.

UNCTAD expresses its appreciation to the participants of the “2nd Papua New Guinea national workshop on the MSG Green Trade Project” that took place on 22–23 June 2023 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Their inputs were invaluable to finalize the report.

This report is part of the project “Green trade for sustainable development in Pacific small island developing States of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)”. The project was financed through tranche 12 of the United Nations Development Account and implemented by UNCTAD jointly with the MSG Secretariat.

UNCTAD gratefully acknowledges the support of the Government of Papua New Guinea, particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Trade Office, which contributed significantly to the success of the project.



Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
MTDP IV	The fourth Medium Term Development Plan, covering 2023-2027
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NAQIA	National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority
NISIT	National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology
NTM	Non-tariff measures
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SPC	Pacific Community
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VSS	Voluntary Sustainability Standards
WTO	World Trade Organization



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Glossary

Synergistic Linkages

Synergistic linkages are connections or relationships between different components, entities, or processes that result in a combined effect greater than the sum of their individual effects. Put more simply, it is ***when multiple elements work together in a way that enhances overall impact or effectiveness.***

Synergistic linkages might refer to **partnerships** between **companies, government and the international community** where **each partner contributes resources, expertise, or market access**, leading to increased **sales, cost savings, or other benefits** that ***would not be achievable without this coordination.***

In the specific context of the **MSG Green Trade Project**, examples of connections that can lead to **synergistic linkages** include farmers, trading agencies/companies, the governments and the international community engaged in quality infrastructure and market access. Examples in Papua New Guinea include promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development by encouraging growers to take up organic farming practices for vanilla products and to seek organic certification. This would improve product quality and enable access to more valuable markets, which in turn empowers women, provides opportunities for youth and improves life for rural communities.

Green Trade

Green trade, while not having a universally agreed-upon definition, broadly **refers to the exchange of goods and services that are produced, marketed, and consumed in a manner that ensures environmental sustainability and economic viability.**

Within the framework of the **MSG Green Trade Project**, green trade specifically encompasses agricultural goods that are produced sustainably. This sustainable production not only minimizes the environmental impact but also supports and reinforces local communities, contributing to economic and social well-being. By focusing on agricultural goods produced in such a manner, the MSG Green Trade Project aligns closely with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It particularly emphasizes the objective of “leaving no one behind,” ensuring that the benefits of trade and sustainable agricultural practices are equitably distributed among all stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups within society.



Note

The report on *Synergistic linkages between green trade sustainable development in Papua New Guinea* is part of the **Green trade for sustainable development in Pacific small island developing States of the Melanesian Spearhead Group** (MSG) project,¹ referred to as the MSG Green Trade Project.

Conducted by UNCTAD and the MSG Secretariat², the objective of the MSG Green Trade Project is to identify and strengthen synergistic linkages between green trade promotion and the Sustainable Development Strategies (SDS) of MSG member States – Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – in a regionally collaborative manner.

This report was prepared jointly by UNCTAD, the MSG Secretariat and the Government of Papua New Guinea and is the final output for Papua New Guinea of Phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 comprises all national activities to identify potential synergistic linkages and to promote green trade. This report draws on the Phase 1 activities, notably:

- 1) Organizing two national workshop in Papua New Guinea.
- 2) Collecting and publishing Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) data for Papua New Guinea.
- 3) Publishing the Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) Guidebook for Vanilla in Papua New Guinea.
- 4) Publishing the Papua New Guinea Vanilla Export Guide.

The Phase 1 activities and reports laid the foundation for Phase 2, which entailed the creation of a *Subregional Action Plan for Green Trade Promotion* at the MSG level.

¹ The project website and project document can be accessed at: <https://unctad.org/project/green-trade-sustainable-development-pacific-small-island-developing-states-melanesian>

² For more information, see: <https://msgsec.info/about-msg/>



Executive summary

This report explores potential synergistic linkages between green trade and sustainable development in Papua New Guinea and creates a matrix identifying these links. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Papua New Guinea faces specific challenges and opportunities in its pursuit of sustainable development. Smallness, remoteness, a narrow export base, and high exposure to external economic shocks together with global environmental challenges represent exceptional vulnerabilities. Green trade can be an integral element for overcoming some of the challenges and achieving sustainable development. The importance of green trade lies in two areas. First, it opens doors to specialized markets that value sustainability, creating enhanced economic prospects. Secondly, it offers notable social and environmental benefits.

The Papua New Guinea Synergistic Linkages Matrix contains two policy recommendations for green trade and describe how green trade can contribute to the country's national sustainable development strategies and further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This matrix is built on data related to Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) and a comprehensive assessment of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) for the Papua New Guinea vanilla sector, developed as part of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Green Trade Project.³ NTMs, i.e. regulations other than tariffs that can affect trade, and VSS, i.e. voluntary standards setting specific economic, social, and environmental criteria, are identified as instrumental in fostering environmental protection, social inclusion, and economic prosperity. Table 1 presents a summary of the policy recommendations and expected benefits, which are some of the key insights from this report.



Table 1

Policy recommendations for Papua New Guinea and expected benefits

Policy recommendation	Expected benefit
1. Publish trade-related regulations in a more systemic manner.	Better access to regulatory information will allow policymakers and researchers to undertake policy reviews across the domains of individual ministries, as well as reducing private sector cost to find the information on and comply with regulations.
2. Prepare the inclusion of the CODEX Alimentarius Standard for vanilla.	The inclusion of the Standard, for instance under the Food Sanitation Regulation, will guarantee the minimum marketable quality of vanilla to international buyers, ensuring the health and safety of consumers.

Source: UNCTAD.

³ See: <https://unctad.org/project/green-trade-sustainable-development-pacific-small-island-developing-states-melanesian>



While green trade policies present potential synergies with the “Leaving No One Behind” principle and Papua New Guinea’s national development priorities of inclusivity through fostering opportunities to enhance rural inclusion, women empowerment and youth engagement, several challenges remain and need to be addressed for these synergies to materialize. Rural communities in Papua New Guinea face barriers related to inadequate infrastructure and limited access to markets (Lowy Institute, 2017). Green trade policies may not yield their full potential if rural areas lack proper transportation, storage facilities, and market linkages. Addressing these deficits is crucial to unlocking the benefits of green trade for these communities. In addition, gender inequalities remain pervasive and ensuring equitable participation of women in green trade initiatives requires targeted efforts, capacity-building, and policy adjustments to promote gender balance in the sector (UN Women, n.d.). Lastly, encouraging youth to stay in rural areas and actively engage in agriculture and green trade is a complex challenge. Many young people migrate to urban centres or abroad in search of better economic opportunities and modern lifestyles. Retaining youth in rural areas necessitates a multifaceted approach, which may involve providing education, training, and access to modern amenities while preserving cultural heritage.

The report offers a way forward through specific policy recommendations and a matrix of synergistic linkages, emphasizing the significance of regional integration in the Pacific region and guiding the creation of a sub-regional action plan for MSG countries. The comprehensive approach outlined underscores the potential of green trade as a tool for achieving sustainable development in Papua New Guinea, leveraging the strengths of NTMs and VSS while addressing the challenges that are unique to SIDS.





1. Introduction

This report identifies a matrix of synergistic linkages between green trade and sustainable development for Papua New Guinea. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Papua New Guinea faces specific challenges and opportunities in its pursuit of sustainable development. Smallness, remoteness, a narrow export base, and exposure to global environmental challenges and external economic shocks come as “unique and particular vulnerabilities” (United Nations, 2012).

Green trade is an integral element of overcoming some of the challenges and achieving sustainable development. Its importance lies in two areas. First, it opens doors to specialized markets that value “sustainability”, creating new economic opportunities. Secondly, it offers notable social and environmental benefits. In this context, Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) and Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) are important. They help in enhancing green trade and aligning it with Papua New Guinea’s national sustainable development strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015).

The Papua New Guinea matrix of synergistic linkages presents how the policy recommendations, identified by this project and focused on fostering green trade, can contribute to achieving the country’s national sustainable development plan. The matrix is based on a foundation of data related to NTMs, as well as a comprehensive assessment of VSS for the Papua New Guinea vanilla sector, both of which were developed as part of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Green Trade Project funded by the United Nations. NTMs and VSS are key instruments to shape the country’s green trade. NTMs, being mandatory trade requirements stipulated in regulations often for public

objectives, form the essential framework which enables green trade. Meanwhile, VSS, which are voluntary private standards and requirements, set out to meet specific economic, social and environmental metrics. Adhering to VSS can create opportunities to access niche markets that are more lucrative and hence increase the value of products available for export. Ultimately, NTMs and VSS serve as tools for enhancing environmental protection, social inclusion, and economic prosperity.

Section 2 provides an overview of Papua New Guinea’s sustainable development strategies. Based on the confirmed linkage between Papua New Guinea’s strategies and the 2030 Agenda, Section 3 examines the potential of Papua New Guinea’s NTMs and VSS for promoting green trade and achieving the SDGs, with a specific focus on vanilla as an example of the transformative potential of VSS. Section 4 assesses potential opportunities and challenges arising from green trade promotion from the perspective of rural communities and of women and youth, to highlight the importance of “Leaving No One Behind”. Section 5 points the way forward, making two specific policy recommendations and presenting a matrix of synergistic linkages between these green trade policy recommendations and the achievement of the country’s sustainable development strategies.



This report was drafted jointly by UNCTAD and the MSG Secretariat, with involvement from the Papua New Guinea Government in the process. It incorporates feedback and inputs from participants of the “Second Papua New Guinea national MSG Green Trade Project” workshop held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on 22-23 June 2023.

This report also acknowledges the significance of regional integration in the Pacific region. The two policy recommendations and the matrix of linkages presented in Section 4 – together with similar matrices from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – were used to guide the creation of a *Subregional Action Plan for Green Trade Promotion* for MSG countries.



2. Papua New Guinea's national development priorities

Papua New Guinea has three levels of development plan, covering forty-, twenty- and five-year time horizons. The three plans are explained briefly below.

2.1 Papua New Guinea Vision 2050

The Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, developed by the National Planning Committee (2009), is a strategic framework designed to guide the country's development from 2010 to 2050. Vision 2050 is structured around the central theme of transforming Papua New Guinea into a smart, wise, fair, healthy, and happy society by 2050 (National Planning Committee, 2009). This transformation is envisioned through the following seven strategic focus areas:

- 1. Human capital development, gender, youth and people empowerment:** *Vision 2050* emphasizes the development of a well-educated and healthy population. It advocates for improvements in the quality of education and healthcare, aiming to create a knowledgeable, skilled, and innovative workforce.
- 2. Wealth creation:** A significant aspect of *Vision 2050* is harnessing the country's vast natural resources responsibly and sustainably. It focuses on diversifying the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and ensuring that the benefits of resource exploitation contribute to national development.
- 3. Institutional development and service delivery:** Improving governance and public service delivery is seen as crucial. *Vision 2050* calls for strengthening institutions, enhancing public sector efficiency, and ensuring transparent and accountable governance.
- 4. Security and international relations:** *Vision 2050* recognizes the importance of maintaining national security and developing positive international relations. It stresses the need for a stable and peaceful internal environment and constructive engagement with other nations.
- 5. Environmental sustainability and climate change:** Recognizing the country's rich biodiversity and the threats posed by climate change, the *Vision 2050* includes strategies for environmental conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.
- 6. Spiritual, cultural, and community development:** Papua New Guinea's diverse cultural heritage is seen as a strength. *Vision 2050* supports the preservation and promotion of cultural values and spiritual beliefs, contributing to national identity and social cohesion.



7. **Strategic planning, integration, and control:** The final area focuses on the effective implementation of *Vision 2050* through integrated planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. It emphasizes the need for a coordinated approach across all sectors to achieve the Vision's objectives.

2.1.1 Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030

Under the 40-year framework set by the Vision 2050, there exists the Papua New Guinea Development Strategic Plan from 2010 to 2030 (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, 2010). This 20-year plan translates the seven focus areas of *Vision 2050* into concise directions for economic policies, public policies and sector interventions with clear objectives, quantitative targets and baseline indicators.

2.1.2 Medium Term Development Plan IV 2023-2027

Then, there is a 5-year development plan called the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP). The fourth edition of MTDP from 2023 to 2027, hereafter MTDP IV, was launched in 2023.⁴ The objectives of the MTDP IV are to “grow the Gross Domestic Product by 164 billion kina towards the 2030 target of 200 billion kina by doubling the country's internal and export revenues and creating one million new jobs by 2027” (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, 2023). It also defines 12 Strategic Priority Areas as follows:

1. Strategic Economic Investment
2. Connect Papua New Guinea's Infrastructure
3. Quality and Affordable Health Care
4. Quality Education and Skilled Human Capital
5. Rule of Law and Restorative Justice

6. National Security
7. National Revenue and Public Finance Management
8. Digital Government, National Statistics and Public Service Governance
9. Research, Science and Technology
10. Climate Change and Natural Environment Protection
11. Population, Youth and Women Empowerment
12. Strategic Partnerships

2.2 Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

Since 2016, the government of Papua New Guinea has worked towards embedding the SDGs into its national development plans and annual budgets (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, 2020). Within the *MTDP IV*, each of the twelve Strategic Priority Areas includes several targets and indicators. These indicators are in turn matched to the SDG indicators, thus localising the SDGs to Papua New Guinea. The alignment between the SDGs and the twelve Strategic Priority Areas from *MTDP IV* are summarised in Table 4 of Annex 2.

Papua New Guinea has set up a dual approach to further the implementation of the SDGs. This includes the formation of two high-level inter-Ministerial working committees. One committee is responsible for providing leadership and strategic oversight of the economic sector interventions that deal with raising revenues and prudent expenditures. The other is tasked with making social and development sector interventions to ensure better quality services are reaching the people in an environment that is free from systematic wastage through corruption and complacency (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, 2020).

⁴ Before the fourth MTDP, previous three MTDPs had been established for the period from 2011 to 2015, from 2016 to 2017 and from 2018 to 2022, respectively.



3. Papua New Guinea's NTMs and VSS for green trade and sustainable development

In Papua New Guinea, the MSG Green Trade Project collected NTM data and drafted a VSS guidebook for vanilla (UNCTAD, 2024). These two activities shed light on the state and characteristics of NTMs and VSS in the country. Trade plays a key role and not only provides Papua New Guinea with market opportunities but also serves as a vehicle for economic development (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, PNG, 2010). Meanwhile, NTMs and VSS, together with the traditional tool – customs tariffs – are key instruments to shape the trade. For example, over the last few years, Papua New Guinea has reduced some barriers to trade, including by abolishing import quotas and sharply lowering import tariffs (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, PNG, 2010). The following subsections will explore the current state and, more importantly, the potential of NTMs and VSS in these regards.

3.1 The Potential for NTMs

NTMs are policy measures, other than tariffs, that can potentially affect international trade (UNCTAD, 2010). According to the methodology of UNCTAD's NTM data collection, which was rolled out in Papua New Guinea under this MSG Green Trade project, NTMs are considered to be mandatory and substantive requirements stipulated in regulatory documents. As an example, NTMs include sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT) measures to quantitative restrictions, fees and charges. They differ from VSS, voluntary rather than mandatory, and procedural requirements, which are administrative rather than substantive. Therefore, NTMs and VSS complement each other by addressing different aspects of trade requirements.

NTMs can provide significant opportunities for Papua New Guinea to align its trade practices with its sustainable development goals. On the one hand, NTMs can be designed and implemented in ways that directly support sustainable development objectives. For instance, quality requirements for imported medicines can help protect public health and emission level requirements for imported cars can help and prevent air pollution, ultimately supporting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) respectively. These measures have great leverage because Papua New Guinea is highly dependent on imported pharmaceuticals, machinery, vehicles and fuels. Moreover, NTMs could be particularly relevant for Papua New Guinea's vanilla sector, where maintaining high standards of production could facilitate access to



international niche markets and promote sustainable practices within the industry.

However, it is important to note that while NTMs hold potential for advancing sustainable development, their design and implementation need to be carefully managed. Poorly designed or implemented NTMs can create trade distortions, increase the cost of trade, and potentially have negative impacts on sustainable development. With tariff liberalization, NTMs have risen as a main obstacle to trade and maybe three times more restrictive to trade than tariffs. (UNCTAD, 2013) Therefore, it is critical to ensure that NTMs are transparent, non-discriminatory, and do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

UNCTAD conducted NTM data collection in Papua New Guinea for the first time in 2017. Under the MSG Green Trade project, UNCTAD undertook a second round of data collection by updating the data from 2017. It examined regulatory documents that were active at the end of 2021. The study identified 788 NTMs from 193 regulations governed by 33 different ministries and departments.⁵ Below is the summary of NTMs in Papua New Guinea.

- 679 measures targeted imported products.
- 109 measures targeted products for export.
- The three groups of measures that are most prevalent:
 - o SPS and TBT measures (662 measures), such as requirements on hygiene, quality, production, post-production, transport, storage, labelling,

packaging, inspection, testing and certificate.

- o quantitative restrictions (44 measures), such as authorization requirements or prohibition.
- o fees, charges and taxes (39 measures).
- All products are subject to the following NTMs:
 - o correct trade description and
 - o quarantine if arriving via an overland route or an inland water route.
- The three most regulated product groups are animals, plants and products thereof; food products; and telecommunication equipment, based on the number of regulations.
- The two least regulated product groups are building materials and renewable energy.

Almost half the NTMs in Papua New Guinea (45 per cent) have positive and direct linkages to SDGs.⁶ This share is low compared with the averages for MSG member States, SIDS and the world, which are 56 per cent, 48 per cent and 45 per cent respectively.

Figure 1 offers a detailed analysis of the alignment between Papua New Guinea's NTMs and SDGs, quantifying the percentage of NTMs linked to each SDG. Some NTMs may relate to multiple SDGs. The figure includes comparisons with the average shares of the proportion of NTMs linked to each SDG for MSG member States, SIDS and the global average.

⁵ UNCTAD also identified 8 NTMs that had been repealed before end-2021. Including the repealed NTMs, UNCTAD identified 796 NTMs in total. They were from 193 regulations and governed by 33 different ministries and departments.

⁶ The methodology of calculating the share of NTMs that are linked to the SDGs takes only the NTMs under Chapters A to F and P into account. The NTMs under Chapters G to O are excluded from the calculation. The calculation used the preliminary Papua New Guinea data available as of October 2023, which contained 790 NTMs under Chapter A to F and P (see UNCTAD, 2019).



The figure shows that:

- Around 27 per cent of Papua New Guinea NTMs directly promote SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). The NTMs ensure the efficacy and safety of medicines, thus supporting the fight against diseases and mortality rate. They also contribute to controlling the use of narcotic drugs and alcohol and implementing the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Although there were food labelling requirements concerning nutritional value or health warnings, as well as safety measures to prevent poison exposure, the share of these specific measures was comparably lower than the averages for the reference groups.
- Approximately 15 per cent of Papua New Guinea NTMs directly support SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). SPS measures on a wide range of agricultural, fishery, forestry and biological products help ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices.
- Despite being small in numbers, Papua New Guinea NTMs support:
 - SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by controlling the flow of arms, explosives and radioactive materials.
 - SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by regulating the trade of radioactive and hazardous waste and second-hand articles, including cars and clothing.
 - SDG 15 (Life On Land) through the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the control of timber export.

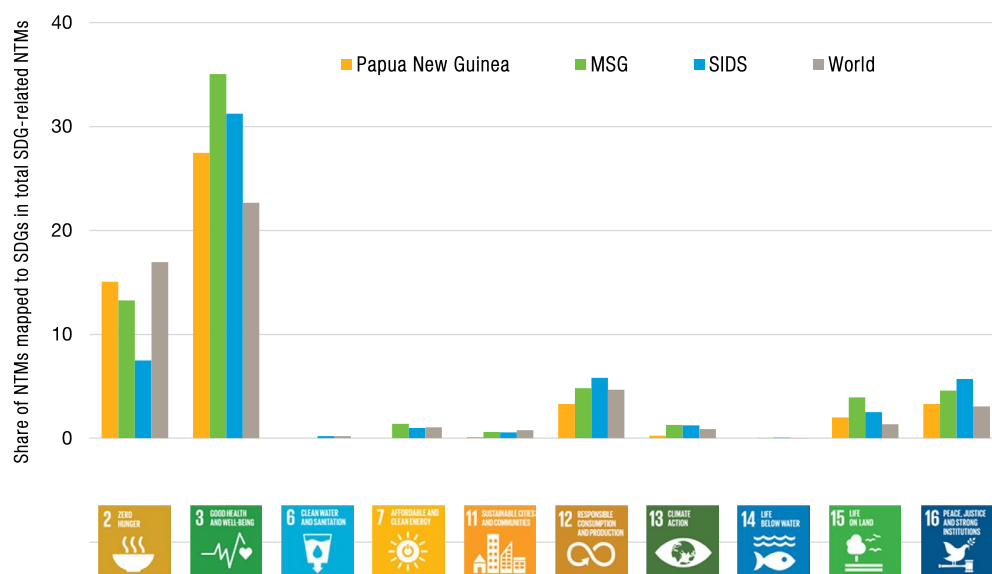
The **detailed analysis of Papua New Guinea NTMs revealed potential areas where the country can further promote green trade and support sustainable development** through good NTMs:



Figure 1

The impact of Papua New Guinea's NTMs on SDGs

Share of NTMs in Papua New Guinea that address each SDG, including comparisons with MSG member States, SIDS, and global averages



Source: UNCTAD and UN ESCAP calculation, October 2023.⁷

⁷ The methodology was developed between UN ESCAP and UNCTAD and the calculation was undertaken by UN ESCAP based on the NTM data collected by UNCTAD.



Papua New Guinea can consider establishing TBT measures to ensure water efficiency of certain machines.

- Papua New Guinea has established, through a series of animal quarantine conditions and plant quarantine conditions, detailed SPS and TBT measures that are product-specific and sometimes even country-specific. These conditions apply mostly to imported products. However, the country has a comparatively small number of equivalent measures for export. These conditions target a narrower group of products, for example, fish, cocoa and coffee. The **country could consider reviewing these export measures through a holistic lens and extending the measures to other key export products**. Such measures can help with attracting market opportunities and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices within the country, contributing to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being).
- There are three international conventions that address the cross-border management of hazardous wastes and chemicals: the Basel Convention; the Rotterdam Convention; and the Stockholm Convention. Papua New Guinea has ratified the Basel Convention and the Stockholm Convention. The country can consider fully establishing TBT measures and quantitative restrictions pursuant to these two Conventions and **controlling the export and import of hazardous wastes and chemicals**. Such measures would support SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).
- Papua New Guinea does not have any NTMs that are linked to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitization). Although they are small, some countries in the reference groups of SIDS and the World have put such NTMs in place. Papua New Guinea can consider establishing TBT measures to ensure water efficiency of certain machines, baths,

sinks, water basins and other sanitary fittings to support this SDG.

- NTMs of Papua New Guinea's cover a broad range of products with a high level of detail, as mentioned in the case of animal quarantine conditions and plant quarantine conditions. However, many regulations and measures are not currently available online. In addition to the lack of a central legal depository, individual agency-level webpages are either under maintenance or not providing regulatory documents. Increasing transparency would contribute to implementing good NTMs efficiently and effectively.

3.2 The Potential for VSS

VSS have emerged as useful governance tools for global value chains, addressing related sustainability concerns towards advancing sustainable development (Marx et al., 2022). VSS can support economic, social and environmental goals. For example, VSS are often linked to higher wages and benefit from a price premium often benefitting the producers in developing countries. Due to environmental requirements such as the avoidance of certain pesticides, they can contribute to environmental related SDGs. Over the past decade, VSS proliferation across sectors has resulted in a considerable growth in market coverage. For example, around 25 per cent of global cocoa production, and 16 per cent of global cotton production is certified by some sustainability standard (Bissinger et al., 2020). Currently, there are around 329 VSS operating across the globe, out of which 60 are active in Papua New Guinea (according to the International Trade Centre Standards Map). Some examples of VSS active in Papua New Guinea are: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Fairtrade International, Forest Stewardship Council, and Pacific Organic Standard.⁸

⁸ For more information, see: <https://standardsmap.org/en/identify?q=eyJzZWxIY3RlZENsaWVudCI6Ik5PIEFGRkIMSU90In0%3D&origin=Papua%20New%20Guinea>

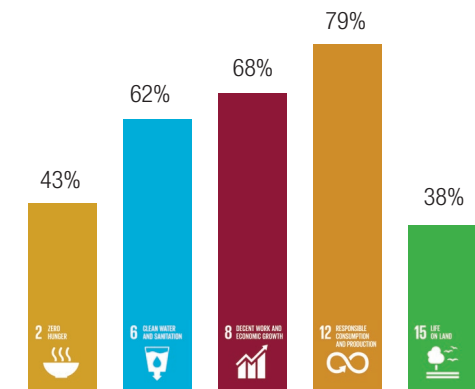
Current research on 232 VSS indicates that based on the requirements of VSS, they have the potential to significantly contribute to the SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 1 (No Poverty) (Bissinger et al., 2020; Schleifer et al., 2022).

With respect to organic products, studies on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Standard (Version 2) have demonstrated that approximately 40-80 per cent of its requirements can address SDGs 2, 6, 8, 12, and 15 (Kosolapova et al., 2023).⁹ IFOAM is the “Global umbrella organization of organic agriculture”. Although national and regional organic standards differ, substantive requirements across various organic standards tend to be largely similar. The potential impact of the IFOAM Standard, one of the most prominent organic standards, on the SDGs implies that the existing organic standards in Papua New Guinea, such as the Pacific Organic Standard would have similar impact on the SDG.

1. Advance SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by supporting agricultural productivity, farmers’ livelihoods, and sustainable food production.
2. Advance SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by improving water quality and water-use efficiency.
3. Advance SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by promoting ethical practices and labour rights.
4. Advance SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by supporting environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste.
5. Advance SDG 15 (Life on Land) by supporting sustainable forest management, conservation of forests, and biodiversity protection.

Figure 2 illustrates the extent to which the requirements prescribed in the IFOAM address selected SDGs.

Figure 2
Linking VSS with the SDGs
Extent to which IFOAM standard requirements address selected SDGs, average degree of coverage



Source: UNCTAD based on Kosolapova et al. (2023).

In the Oceania region, Papua New Guinea has over 88,000 hectares of organic land (around 7.4 per cent of total national agricultural land in Papua New Guinea), second in the region only to Australia which has 35.7 million hectares (Willer et al., 2023). Willer et al. (2023), also indicate that there are around 12,827 organic producers and other operator types in Papua New Guinea as of 2021. Further, Papua New Guinea was also the second-largest exporter of organic products in the Oceania region. In 2021, the country exported approximately 2,500 metric tonnes of organic products (mostly coffee). Beyond coffee, other products such as vanilla also present opportunities for farmers and exporters alike (see Box 1). Considering this, Papua New Guinea has an opportunity to leverage VSS requirements to align its development priorities with the SDGs. By adopting VSS, Papua New Guinea can achieve the dual objectives of improving national prosperity by increasing exports and farmer’s revenue, while also contributing to sustainable development and protecting the environment (UNCTAD, 2024).

⁹ Standard document available at: <https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/organic-guarantee-system/ifoam-standard>



Box 1

Case study: VSS and the vanilla sector in Papua New Guinea

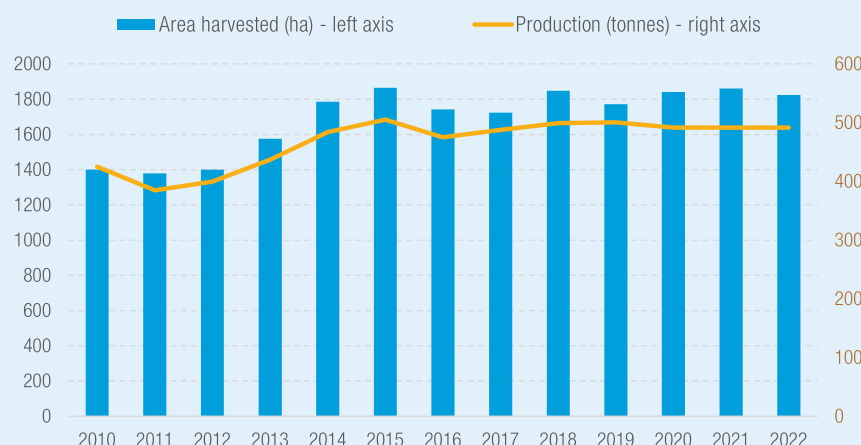
Vanilla is a key source of income for smallholder farmers and local economies in many tropical areas (Global Crop Diversity Trust, 2021). Due to widespread global appeal, vanilla has become an important part of the agricultural sector in Papua New Guinea, particularly in the East and West Sepik provinces. The cultivation primarily involves two species: *Vanilla planifolia* and *Vanilla tahitensis*, with the latter being more prevalent and suitable for growing conditions in Papua New Guinea. (More information can be found in the UNCTAD's report (2024) "A Voluntary Sustainability Standards Guidebook for Vanilla in Papua New Guinea.")

Papua New Guinea ranks as the 4th largest vanilla producer in the world, holding over 6 per cent of the global market in 2022, and is the largest exporter of the subspecies vanilla *tahitensis*. Madagascar leads the global market with 40 per cent of world production, followed by Indonesia with 26 per cent (FAOSTAT, 2023). Papua New Guinea has the capacity to increase vanilla exports by increasing productivity and improving quality, which would support higher prices and a larger share of the market globally. The production trend for vanilla in Papua New Guinea can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Unlocking vanilla's potential

Vanilla in Papua New Guinea: area harvested (ha) and production (tonnes)



Source: UNCTAD creation based on FAOStat.

Vanilla farming in Papua New Guinea is a significant source of income for local farmers as well as a way to supply a product that is in high demand. Cultivating vanilla provide farmers with a diversified source of revenue, thus enhancing economic stability. In Papua New Guinea, if grown at its productive maximum per hectare, vanilla will provide an income higher than cocoa or coffee even at a market price below US\$30 per kilogramme.¹⁰ However, vanilla farming is labour-intensive compared to cocoa or coffee cultivation (UNCTAD, 2023).

¹⁰ "The average price for the last 30 years has been US\$ 60-100 per kilogramme" (UNCTAD, 2023).



The vanilla market is known for its volatility, with significant fluctuations in prices. This variability can severely impact lower quality vanilla, especially when prices drop. VSS certification, and especially organic, presents an opportunity for Papua New Guinean farmers to improve quality and secure more consistent market access. Organic certification also has environmental benefits, positively affecting soil and water sources on farms. However, achieving this certification involves stringent compliance, which can be challenging and burdensome for farmers (UNCTAD, 2024).

While Papua New Guinea's vanilla industry holds immense potential, it requires continued efforts in standardisation, regulation, and education to fully realise its global market potential. Recent steps towards quality control and sustainable practices have been taken by the national government and are positive indicators of the sector's prospects.





4. Synergistic linkages in green trade: Leaving no one behind

The promotion of green trade through NTMs and organic certification has synergistic linkages with Papua New Guinea's national sustainable development strategies, especially when viewed through the lens of "Leaving No One Behind," one of the fundamental principles of the SDGs. This principle resonates particularly well with Papua New Guinea's Vision 2050 strategic focus on "Human Capital Development, Gender, Youth and People Empowerment" and its midterm plans. This section explores the interplay between green trade and rural communities, women empowerment, and youth engagement, underscoring their significance within the context of Papua New Guinea's 5-year MTDP IV 2023-2027, where inclusivity is paramount.

First, rural communities are central to green trade promotion. Rural communities represent 86 per cent of Papua New Guinea's population and play a pivotal role in agriculture, which accounts for 18.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (World Bank, 2023a; World Bank, 2023b). Promoting green trade through NTMs and organic certification in agriculture can contribute to achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) as quality products can generate income for rural populations; and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) when organic farming methods are used. Green trade helps the sector to move beyond subsistence agriculture towards more professionalised practices. It can also support export diversification, as increased food security and higher quality products enhance trade opportunities. More specifically, promoting these measures in the vanilla sector, which accounts for 1.4 per cent of exports, can help address persistent issues in Papua New Guinea related to low product quality. In turn, through enhancing

quality, organic certification helps generate high-value export opportunities for vanilla. Green trade promotion in agriculture and in the vanilla sector more specifically can hence be a leverage for socio-economic development of rural communities, in line with Papua New Guinea's strategic priority areas under MTDP IV including "1. Strategic Economic Investment" and "Sustainable Enabling Infrastructure".

Secondly, green trade policies can further encourage women's empowerment and help achieve Papua New Guinea's MTDP IV priority area "11. Population, Youth and Women Empowerment". These policies can generate economic opportunities, enhancing both women's participation as well as revenues and encouraging skill development. In vanilla production more specifically, organic certification and the ensuing benefits can empower women and support professionalization in skill areas, such as administrative and management tasks, which remain key stumbling blocks related to adopting VSS in Papua New Guinea. In addition, green trade policies can open up opportunities for women's participation in high-value trade activities.

Thirdly, the promotion of green trade in agriculture presents synergies with engaging youth for the future. The youth play a vital role in innovation such as adopting VSS and implementing sustainable production practices through energy, adaptability, and digital proficiency. Youth participation can hence contribute to the diversification of agriculture by exploring new crop varieties, markets, and high-value agricultural activities. Their engagement not only benefits the agricultural sector and long-term economic opportunities but also aligns with Papua New Guinea's MTDP IV priority

Green trade in Papua New Guinea can become a pivotal tool for enhancing rural livelihoods, empowering women, and engaging the youth in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future.



area “11. Population, Youth and Women Empowerment”. Green trade policies can hence foster opportunities for engaging and empowering the youth by calling for adaptation and innovation.

While green trade policies present potential synergies with the “Leaving No One Behind” principle and Papua New Guinea’s national development priorities of inclusivity through fostering opportunities to enhance rural inclusion, women empowerment and youth engagement, several challenges remain and need to be addressed for these synergies to materialize. Rural communities in Papua New Guinea face barriers related to inadequate infrastructure and limited access to markets (Lowy Institute, 2017). Green trade policies may not yield their full potential if rural areas lack proper transportation, storage facilities, and market linkages. Addressing these deficits is crucial to unlock the benefits of green trade for these communities. In addition, gender inequalities remain pervasive and ensuring equitable participation of

women in green trade initiatives requires targeted efforts, capacity-building, and policy adjustments to promote gender balance in the sector (UN Women, n.d.). Lastly, encouraging youth to stay in rural areas and actively engage in agriculture and green trade is a complex challenge. Many young people migrate to urban centres or abroad in search of better economic opportunities and modern lifestyles. Retaining youth in rural areas necessitates a multifaceted approach, which may involve providing them with education, training, and access to modern amenities while preserving cultural heritage.

By addressing these challenges and embracing inclusivity, green trade in Papua New Guinea can become a pivotal tool for enhancing rural livelihoods, empowering women, and engaging the youth in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future, while advancing the nation’s commitment to the SDGs and its “Leaving No One Behind” principle as well as achieving national development priorities.



5. The way forward – Two policy recommendations

The previous sections discussed how Papua New Guinea can use NTMs and VSS to enhance green trade, while also supporting the sustainable development priorities set forth in the 2030 Agenda, aligning with the country's own sustainable development strategies. Additionally, Section Four examined the interaction between green trade promotion and its effects on rural communities, women, and youth, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. This section sets out two key recommendations for promoting green trade through NTMs and VSS and explains how these can synergize with efforts to achieve the 12 strategic priority areas of MTDP IV 2023-2027. A more comprehensive version can be found in Table 3 of Annex 1.

Policy areas and specific recommendations for action

1. Make NTMs support decision making of policymakers and businesses.

Alignment with national development priorities:

The first recommendation is to publish trade-related regulations more systematically. This action supports the national aims of MTDP IV related to (5) Rule of Law and Restorative Justice and (6) National Security.

Action recommendation:

Publish trade-related regulations in a more systemic manner. Review and propose a common publication system for all trade-related regulations of each

Ministry. This includes agreeing on a centralized publication format (e.g., Online Gazette, PACLII¹¹), documenting the plan with estimated resources and involved officials, and implementing it upon identification of appropriate funding. Additionally, submitting World Trade Organization (WTO) notifications and checking those submitted by other trading partners are essential.

Expected benefit:

Better access to regulatory information will allow policymakers and researchers to undertake policy review across the domains of individual ministries, as well as reducing private sector costs to find the information on and comply with regulations.

Which bodies/organizations can help:

- In Papua New Guinea: All ministries publishing trade related legislations, under coordination of the National Trade Office.
- Other regional and international organizations: UNCTAD, WTO.

2. Use NTMs and VSS to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Alignment with national development priorities:

The second recommendation focuses on preparing for the inclusion of the CODEX Alimentarius Standard for vanilla, ensuring its quality and safety, and enhancing the confidence of foreign buyers. This

¹¹ Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute.



recommendation aligns with multiple strategic priority areas under MTDP IV, including (1) Strategic Economic Investment and (10) Climate Change and Natural Environment Protection.

Action recommendation:

Prepare the inclusion of the CODEX Alimentarius Standard for vanilla.

Review the existing Food Sanitation regulation for integration of the CODEX Standard, conduct stakeholder consultations for input, and present the amendments to the legislative body. Following approval, identify compliance gaps and implement the revised regulation and monitoring mechanisms.

Expected benefit:

The inclusion of the Standard, for instance under the Food Sanitation Regulation, will guarantee the minimum marketable quality of vanilla to international buyers, ensuring the health and safety of consumers.

Which bodies/organizations can help:

- In Papua New Guinea: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA), National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology (NISIT), Spice Board.
- Other regional and international organizations: FAO, Pacific Community (SPC), UNCTAD.

Table 2 presents the synergistic linkages in matrix form, outlining how the policy recommendations create synergistic linkages with Papua New Guinea's national development priorities.

By integrating these policy recommendations into policies to implement sustainable development plan, Papua New Guinea can harness the potential of NTMs and VSS to advance its development priorities, foster sustainable practices, and create an enabling environment for green trade that aligns with the SDGs.



Table 2

Matrix of synergistic linkages between green trade policy recommendations and Papua New Guinea's national development plan

	Policy recommendation	1. Make NTMs support the decision making of policymakers and businesses	2. Use Non-tariff measures (NTMs) and voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) to Promote Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
National development priority			
1.	Strategic Economic Investment		X
2.	Connect PNG Infrastructure		
3.	Quality and Affordable Health Care		
4.	Quality Education and Skilled Human Capital		
5.	Rule of Law and Restorative Justice	X	
6.	National Security	X	
7.	National Revenue and Public Finance Management	X	
8.	Digital Government, National Statistics and Public Service Governance		
9.	Research, Science and Technology		
10.	Climate Change and Natural Environment Protection		X
11.	Population, Youth and Women Empowerment		
12.	Strategic Partnerships		X

Source: UNCTAD.



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Annex 1: Policy recommendations

Table 3
Summary of policy recommendations for Papua New Guinea

Objective	Policy options	Workplan steps	Who needs to be involved	Expected benefit
I. Make NTMs support the decision making of policy makers and businesses	(1) FIRST POLICY Publish trade-related regulations in a more systemic manner.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the publication system of each Ministry and propose a common publication system. 2. Agree on a format of centralized publication (e.g. Online Gazette, PACLII, Dashboard of all the ministries' publication page). 3. Document the plan (estimated resource, involved officials, etc.) and implement when appropriate funding source is identified. 4. Start to regularise WTO notifications, publishing them on the Trade Portal. And continue to verify them. 	<p>Coordinating Entity: National Trade Office</p> <p>Participating Entities: All Ministries publishing trade-related legislations.</p> <p>Supporting Organizations: UNCTAD, WTO</p>	Better access to regulatory information will allow policymakers and researchers to undertake policy review across the domains of individual ministries', as well as reducing private sector costs to find the information on and comply with regulations.
II. Use Non-tariff measures (NTM) and voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development	(2) SECOND POLICY Prepare the inclusion of the CODEX Alimentarius Standard for vanilla.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the existing Food Sanitation Regulation and identify areas for the inclusion of the CODEX Standard as additional Schedule. 2. Conduct stakeholder consultations to gather inputs and draft the proposed amendments. 3. Present the amendments to the legislative body for review and approval. 4. Once approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify areas where gaps exist to comply with the new standard (e.g. testing machines). - Implement the revised Regulation, revise the Spice Board Act and establish a monitoring mechanism. 	<p>Coordinating Entity: Department of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Participating Entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry of Health - NAQIA - NISIT - Stakeholders in the vanilla industry - Spice board </p> <p>Supporting Organizations: FAO, SPC, UNCTAD</p>	The inclusion of the Standard, for instance under the Food Sanitation Regulation, will guarantee the minimum marketable quality of vanilla to international buyers, ensuring the health and safety of consumers.

Source: UNCTAD.

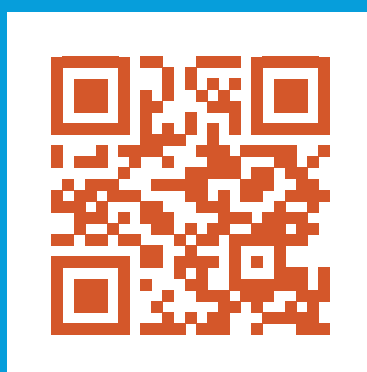
Annex 2: Papua New Guinea's development goals and the SDGs

Table 4

Mapping of Papua New Guinea's development goals under MTDP IV 2023-2027 with the SDGs

SDG		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
National development priority																		
1.	Strategic Economic Investment	X	X			X			X	X					X	X		
2.	Connect PNG Infrastructure	X			X		X	X		X		X						X
3.	Quality and Affordable Health Care			X														
4.	Quality Education and Skilled Human Capital				X													X
5.	Rule of Law and Restorative Justice																X	
6.	National Security																	X
7.	National Revenue and Public Finance Management								X									
8.	Digital Government, National Statistics and Public Service Governance					X		X									X	
9.	Research, Science and Technology		X							X								
10.	Climate Change and Natural Environment Protection									X		X				X		
11.	Population, Youth and Women Empowerment	X		X		X			X		X							
12.	Strategic Partnerships									X								X

Source: UNCTAD.



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