



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SUMMARY

Papua New Guinea is a federal constitutional monarchy with three spheres of government: national, provincial and local. Local government is enshrined in the constitution. No women were elected to parliament during the 2017 national election and in 2013 1.4% of councillors elected were women. There are 22 provinces, the national capital area of Port Moresby, the autonomous region of Bougainville and 89 districts. Local governments are called local-level governments (LLGs). There are 31 urban LLGs and 265 rural LLGs, making a total of 296 local governments. There is little difference in either the composition or the functions and responsibilities of the two types of government. The main governing legislation is the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments 1995 and the Local-level Governments Administration Act 1997. The Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA) within the Ministry of Inter-Government Relations has statutory responsibility for all matters relating to local government. Local governments may levy a variety of local taxes and charges. There are government transfers to cover staff salaries as well as for specific development projects. In 2019, local government expenditure was approximately 1.4% of total government expenditure. LLGs are responsible for water supply and have joint responsibility with provinces for roads, waste disposal, health and environmental protection, economic promotion and tourism.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Papua New Guinea is a federal constitutional monarchy with a unicameral parliament. The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II who is represented by a governor-general. The governor-general can serve a maximum of two six-year terms and is indirectly elected by the members of the parliament with a simple majority for the first term, but needs a two-thirds majority to secure a second term. The 111 members of the parliament (known as MPs) are directly elected through universal adult suffrage from 22 provincial and 89 district single-seat constituencies. The governor-general appoints a prime minister from among the MPs, who is usually the leader of the majority party or largest party within a coalition following a general election. A cabinet of 33 is then appointed from amongst the MPs by the governor-general on the advice of the prime minister. There are 22 provincial assemblies - one for each province - as well as additional assemblies for the autonomous region of Bougainville and the national capital district of Port Moresby. Each assembly comprises the MPs from that province, one additional woman representative, three chieftaincy representatives (where appropriate) and up to three other nominated members.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

Local government is enshrined in the constitution.^{35,2}

2.2 Main legislative texts

- Sections 26, 27 and 28 of the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments 1995 provides for the establishment of LLGs Local-level Governments Administration Act 1997
- Provincial Governments Administration Act 1997

- District Development Authority Act 2015
- City Authority Act 2015
- National Planning Act 2016.

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

In February 2014, parliament amended the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments 1995 to remove the joint district planning and budget priorities committees. The Organic Law now establishes a district development authority DDA in each district. Review of the current Organic Law has led to the proposal of new and revised legislation - an 'Organic Law on Greater Decentralisation'. The new law is intended to transfer more powers to the provincial governments and DDAs through a service delivery partnership framework.

2.4 Traditional leadership

Papua New Guinea is culturally and traditionally the one of most diverse countries in the world with over 1,000 different tribes who speak over 800 different languages. The tribes are made up of clans which are in turn made up of sub-clans which consist of family units. Each tribe has a leader who commands authority and is responsible for giving orders on issues relating the tribe. Coastal communities will often utilise chieftaincy as a system of leadership. Since the introduction of the local government council system in 1995, ward members or councillors have become well recognised and respected leaders within local communities. Councillors will often work closely with traditional leaders to resolve issues and make key decisions concerning tribes or clans.

2.5 National urban policy

The City Authority Act 2015 was introduced for those urban LLGs that have been granted city status. These city authorities will be restructured along



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2020 estimate):
8,969,000

AREA:
462,840 sq km

CAPITAL:
Port Moresby

CURRENCY:
kina (PGK)

HEAD OF STATE:
HM Queen Elizabeth II

GOVERNOR-GENERAL:
Sir Robert Dadae

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:
Prime Minister James Marape

FORM OF GOVERNMENT:
constitutional monarchy

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:
unitary

STATE STRUCTURE:
federal

LANGUAGES:
English, TokPisin, HiriMotu (official)

NATIONAL ELECTIONS:
last: 2017, turnout: na; next: 2022

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2019):
0%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:
last: June 2019, turnout: na; next: 2024

WOMEN COUNCILLORS:
na (2019)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as percentage of total government expenditure 2019:
1.4%

**Table 35.1a Distribution of councils and population**

Region	Provinces	Urban LLGs	Rural LLGs	Total LLGs	Population (2011 Census)	Population (2020 est.)	% rural (2011)
Southern	6	6	61	67	1,302,887	na	na
Highlands	7	10	104	114	3,001,598	na	na
Momase	4	8	90	98	1,795,474	na	na
Islands	5	5	47	52	959,694	na	na
TOTAL	22	31	365	296	7,059,653	8,969,000	90.2

Source: DPLGA communication with CLGF and 2011 Census^{35.3a} UN population estimates^{35.3b}

lines similar to the National Capital District Commission, which governs Port Moresby. In March 2019 the Minister of Inter-governmental relations approved decisions transferring key technical functions of the urban LLGs to the newly established city authorities.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state

There are three spheres of government: national, provincial and local. Local governments are called local-level governments (LLGs). There are 31 urban LLGs and 265 rural LLGs. There is currently little difference in either the composition or the functions and responsibilities of the two types of government. However this structure will be changed if the proposed Organic Law on 'Greater Decentralisation' is passed by the national parliament.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs^{35.3b} (DPLGA) has statutory responsibility for all matters relating to local government. The minister has the power to dismiss members for misconduct in office or for neglect of duty.

3.3 Council types

In both urban and rural LLGs, the head of the LLG (known as the president) is directly elected by the electorate. LLGs have an average of 19 members, elected for a five-year term based on

a ward system. There are 6,375 wards with each ward returning one member. LLGs have full discretion to establish the committees they deem necessary to carry out their functions effectively and efficiently. Each LLG may also have up to three additional members appointed to represent the following interest groups: the Papua New Guinea Trades' Union Congress, the Employers' Federation, and women's organisations. In rural areas two women are nominated.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

Local government elections are held every five years. The latest local elections were held in 2019, and the next 2024.

4.2 Voting system

In the past the first-past-the-post voting system was used, but more recently, it has the limited preferential voting (LPV) system. The 2013 elections were the second time the LPV system was used. Under the LPV system has been used, ward councillors and presidents are elected directly by the people, whereas previously councillors elected their presidents. Political parties do not generally align with politics at the local level.

4.3 Elected representatives

All provinces have directly elected presidents.

4.4 Women's representation

The In each LLG at least two women must be nominated for election. This has ensured the inclusion of at least one female member in each of the 296 local governments, and this member is appointed as women's representative. .

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement and 5.2 Implementation

The Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments 1995 provides for participative structures, including a committee system that involves reporting from community meetings to the LLG via ward development committees. Each ward development committee comprises the elected member for the ward (who is the chairperson) and a maximum of five community representatives (of whom two must be women) as associate members. The function of the ward development committee is to serve as a consultative and advisory committee to the LLG. Citizens are also directly involved through participatory bottom-up planning at the ward and LLG levels, and this process includes all groups of people living in a ward. This empowers communities to identify their priorities with their own plans and budgets, which are then incorporated into LLG, district and provincial plans.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

Mobile telecommunications are now accessible by all LLGs and wards in the country, making communication much easier. Social media is also being widely used to hold elected leaders at all levels accountable.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Papua New Guinea Urban Local-level Government Association^{35.6} (PNGULLGA) represents urban local government in Papua New Guinea. It is recognised in law and membership of the association is mandatory for all urban LLGs. PNGULLGA aims to encourage and protect effective and efficient democratic local government in the urban areas. The association is funded by membership contributions. The association is viewed as an NGO and does not receive any direct grants from national government to support its operations; however, funding support may be provided if requested on a case-by-case basis. There is no association for rural LLGs.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

PNGULLGA works in partnership with national government and its agencies. The Ministry of Inter-Government Relations has specific responsibility for the promotion of intergovernmental relations but other ministries and departments

Table 35.1b Women councillors and mayors following the last three local elections

Election	2008		2013		2019	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Councillors						
Elected female councillors	na	na	89	1.4	na	na
Male councillors	na	na	6,097	98.6	na	na
Total councillors	na	100.0	6,186	100.0	na	100.0
Chairpersons						
Female presidents	3	na	1	3.4	na	na
Male presidents	na	na	28	96.6	na	na
Total presidents	na	100.0	29	100.0	na	100.0

Source: Ministry correspondence with CLGF^{35.4}

**Table 35.2a Income and expenditure for local government 2015/16**

Income	2015/16 PGKm	Expenditure	2015/16 PGKm
Centre-local transfers		Administration	
Transfers to LLGs	165.5	Staff	na
Transfers to wards	63.8	Other administrative costs	na
Council leader salaries	-2		
Locally raised revenue		Services	
Property taxes	na	Roads	na
Licences and fees	na	Water	na
Other income	na	Other	na
TOTAL INCOME	-231.3	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	-231.3

Source: Compiled by CLGF from figures provided by DPLGA

have similar roles. The Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments 1995 provides for a provincial-LLG mediation and arbitration tribunal. This body was created to settle disputes between or within the different spheres of government. In each province, LLGs compile their plans and budgets for submission to a district development authority. The implementation and oversight of the resulting five-year development plan is principally responsibility of the provincial government, working with LLGs.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

Independent scrutiny of LLGs is provided by the Public Services Commission and the auditor general.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure

Most LLGs rely heavily on national government for funding both their recurrent and development budgets. Only a few urban LLGs collect fees and rates; it is therefore not possible to provide accurate income and expenditure.

9.2 Locally raised revenue

Local governments may levy:

- taxes, fees and charges for community services
- public entertainment taxes
- general trading licence fees

- domestic animal licence fees
- billboard fees
- fees for small-scale logging
- other charges, fees and fines.

The DPLGA supervises locally raised taxes through budget approval and reporting.

9.3 Transfers

The standard grants made to local government include: administration support grant (unconditional); staffing grant; development grants; town and urban services grants. LLGs are also given K500,000 annually for service improvements. This is in addition to a direct allocation of K10,000 annually made to each of the 6,375 council wards.

9.4 Loans

As legitimate governments, LLGs can apply for loans to assist in delivering services but, given the lack of steady income flows to repay the loans, commercial banks are not keen to lend to them. Some well-established business arms of LLGs do take out commercial loans.

9.5 Local authority staff

All elected council leaders are full-time and are paid 400-700 per month under the current allowance policy. This remuneration is approved by the National Executive Council. Local government staff are members of the

national public service and are recruited centrally through the Department of Personnel Management and Provincial Administration. They come under the provincial administration human resources structure. The district administrator is also the chief executive officer of the LLG in a district, and is responsible for administrative services and the coordination of policy formulation, planning and implementation. National-level officers of the public service may from time to time be deployed to work within the districts. Local salaries are paid by national government in the form of a specific grant.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

Most public services are provided by the national government with support from the provinces, DDAs and city authorities, as well as LLGs. Local governments are involved in: the development of roads and parks; refuse collection and disposal; health and environmental protection; economic promotion and tourism; and are also responsible for water supply. LLGs are empowered to generate internal revenue as a means to sustain and improve their service delivery. Service delivery responsibilities of LLGs are clearly outlined in Organic Law. They are also engaged, through the DPLGA, in the delivery of the World Bank's Rural Service Delivery and Local Governance programme, which aims to strengthen community engagement in service delivery.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

The LLGs use email and internet for communication between local governments and national agencies, and computers and laptops to produce reports and collect data to assist in service delivery.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

To help achieve the SDGs, the national government has developed a service delivery framework, a service delivery agreement and a set of minimum standards for districts and LLGs. It is also gradually transferring more powers and functions to provinces, DDAs and LLGs.

The World Bank Rural Service Delivery programme (see section 10.1) together with bottom-up planning through the LLG and ward plans, is also contributing to the national SDG planning. In the last five years Papua New Guinea has faced many challenges in terms of meeting the development indicators of the UN SDGs but has also made significant

Table 35.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2019

	2017 estimated (PGKm)	2018 estimated (PGKm)	2019 budgeted (PGKm)
Total government expenditure	13,835	14,727.9	16,133.5
Total local government expenditure	227.8	na	231.3
Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure	1.6%	na	1.4%

Source: Calculated by CLGF from the figures in table 2a and the 2017 national budget statement³⁵⁹



progress. Going forward national government intends to place greater focus on sustaining future improvement at the community level.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 35.1a National government portal www.pm.gov.pg
- 35.1b Women in national parliaments Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 35.2 Constitution of Papua New Guinea www.parliament.gov.pg/constitution-of-the-independent-state-of-papua-new-guinea
- 35.3a Population census www.nso.gov.pg/index.php/population-and-social
- 35.3b UN population estimate 2019 www.who.int/countries/png/en
- 35.3c Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs www.dplga.gov.pg/
- 35.4 Electoral Commission <http://www.pnhec.gov.pg/>
- 35.5 No reference for this section
- 35.6 PNG ULLGA <http://wilgpacific.org/whats-new/news/re-establishment-png-urban-local-level-government-association-png-ullga>
- 35.7 No reference for this section
- 35.8 No reference for this section
- 35.9 Based on figures in table 2a and <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/pg/Documents/financial-services/deloitte-pg-fs-papua-new-guinea-budget-2019-151118.pdf.pdf> for total government expenditure in 2016
- 35.10 No reference for this section
- 35.11a World Population Prospects 2019 https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_DataBooklet.pdf
- 35.11b UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 35.11c Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub
- 35.11d UNDP HDR PNG country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PNG>



Annex 35a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Papua New Guinea

Services	Delivering authority				Remarks
	National government	Provinces	Urban LLGs	Rural LLGs	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION					
Police	■				Most services are provided by the national government with support given by both provincial and local governments as indicated
Fire protection	■				
Civil protection	■				
Criminal justice	■				
Civil status register	■				
Statistical office	■				
Electoral register	■				
EDUCATION					
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)	■	■			
Primary	■	■			
Secondary	■				
Vocational and technical	■				
Higher education	■				
Adult education	■				
SOCIAL WELFARE					
Family welfare services	■				
Welfare homes	■				
Social security	■				
PUBLIC HEALTH					
Primary care	■				
Hospitals	■				
Health protection	■				
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING					
Housing	■				
Town planning	■				
Regional planning	■				
TRANSPORT					
Roads	■	■	■	■	
Transport	■				
Urban roads	■		■	■	
Urban rail	nil				
Ports	■				
Airports	■				
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION					
Water and sanitation	■		■	■	
Refuse collection and disposal				■	
Cemeteries and crematoria				■	
Slaughterhouses	■		■	■	
Environmental protection	■		■	■	
Consumer protection	■		■	■	
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS					
Theatres and concerts	■	■	■	■	
Museums and libraries	■	■	■	■	
Parks and open spaces	■		■	■	
Sports and leisure facilities	■	■	■	■	
Religious facilities	■	■	■	■	
UTILITIES					
Gas services					
District heating					
Water supply	■		■	■	
Electricity	■				
ECONOMIC					
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■				
Local economic development/promotion	■				
Trade and industry	■				
Tourism	■				

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service