

## **ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY) <sup>1</sup>**

1. Papua New Guinea (PNG) is richly endowed with land, forests, coastal and marine resources, minerals, and oil and gas and is one of the last three remaining major tropical natural wilderness areas on earth, harboring 5%–7% of the world's biodiversity. However, 37% of the population lives below the poverty line, and PNG is one of the poorest countries in the world. Its extreme poverty has put intense pressure on the government to make trade in natural resources the engine of economic growth. This, and population pressure, threatens the environment. In addition to such problems as deforestation caused by large-scale logging and water pollution due to mine tailings and solid waste, PNG's fragile natural environment faces serious climate change challenges. These are likely to exacerbate event-driven hazards (e.g., coastal and inland flooding) and may also introduce new hazards such as increased malaria penetration in the highlands, changed agricultural yields, and damaged coral reefs. Climate change will increase threats to food security through its impacts on food production, health, infrastructure, the ability to import food, and the ability of households to purchase food.

2. It is imperative that PNG's climate change response—mainly through adaptation and mitigation—be mainstreamed into government policy, planning, and programming in order to improve the resilience of communities and help mitigate climate change impacts. However, the country's capacity to adapt to climate change is constrained by institutional, technological, and cultural factors. Human resources development and capacity building are urgently needed to facilitate an understanding of climate adaptation and to ensure the climate change response is taken into account in national policy and planning. There is also an urgent need to raise the population's knowledge and awareness of climate change. Technical and financial support from development partners, including NGOs, is needed for these to materialize.

3. Consistent with ADB's Strategy 2020 and Pacific Approach, 2010-2014, and in support of the Government's Vision 2050, Climate-Compatible Development Plan, and National Climate Resilience Plan, all of which target environmentally sustainable economic growth, ADB will provide technical and financial assistance to address limitations of existing policy frameworks, institutional structures, and capacity for implementing the action required for effective climate mitigation and climate resilience. Through the Pacific Climate Change Program, ADB will assist five Pacific countries including PNG to improve their resilience to climate change impacts through (i) mainstreaming climate change adaptation in their policy frameworks, and (ii) strengthening their systems and capabilities to foster the adaptation process, including information and decision support tools, and access to affordable financing of climate-proofed development initiatives. The Pilot Program for Climate Resilience seeks to help PNG, Samoa and Tonga to mainstream climate risk assessment and resilience into national development planning. The Regional Partnerships for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness will assist eight Pacific developing member countries including PNG to establish geo-referenced exposure data in a geographic information system platform. This database will provide information on assets at risk and the extent and value of damage in the event of disaster. It will be used to model insurance payouts. PNG will benefit from regional technical assistance for Strengthening Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific, Phase II. This will support more effective management of coastal and marine resources, especially those associated with coral ecosystems and fisheries. It will help to build resilience against threatened climate change impacts and will be financed by ADB, Global Environment Facility, and other development partners.

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<sup>1</sup> This summary is based on ADB. 2010. *Papua New Guinea: Environment and Climate Change*. Manila. Available on request.