

SUBMISSION STATEMENT:

General Comment:

These comments relate not to the day to day administration of the Aid process, but to means of improving impact on the ground. I am aware it is generally felt in PNG that there has been frustration in relation to the staffing processes, and have experienced this personally. In my activity as consultant in various matters in relation to forest administration capacity development, the facet of operational “grunt” has the appearance of being passed over, with the result that line officers do not have an adequate level of confidence that comes from dealing with persons experienced not only in administrative processes, but also having broad and recognized experience “at the rockface” in PNG.

Scope:

In the operational oriented field of forestry – public administration, field monitoring, operational planning and development of regulatory practice and experience are best developed in line officers in “on-job” training/experience, under tutorial support as directed, by qualified personnel, *experienced in this particular case, in field forestry and management in Papua New Guinea*. Recruitment for Field Adviser Positions should involve this facet, with an increased weighting given to PNG input into the selection processes, as it is they who have the predominant interest in capacity improvement in the field.

It has been said by senior PNG personnel that impact would be developed better if the persons selected as Advisers held considerable PNG field experience. This would remove the “learning curve” for those newly involved in servicing Aid requirements, and would improve the level of communication, and place the client/adviser relationship and interaction in better standing through acknowledgement and recognition on both sides. In short, PNG needs operational, not administrative servicing, at a technical and sectoral level.

The World Bank ran into problems with its Structural Development programmes in the mid-90’s. The PNG recipients were told not only what to do, but also how to do it, without adequate servicing of the means. Unfortunately there was a political dimension to these programmes which predominated, which was not helped by the level and type of communication which developed.

It is to be hoped that the Aid Programme by the Australian Government involving Australian Taxpayers dollars does not go the same way, but there is some indication that this could develop if not well managed. It is indeed timely that the Ministerial intervention from Australia has at least seen the problem, if not in its entirety. Due processes must be developed to ensure the integrity of the programmes, the thrust towards field improvement, and security for the client in the knowledge that it has an appropriate level of ownership of the programmes, which does not appear to be the case at present.