

INA Gadona...



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Dear valued members, stakeholders, and contributors,

Greetings from the Institute of National Affairs! It is with immense pride and excitement that I welcome you to the inaugural edition of our newsletter, *INA Gadona*. This platform marks the beginning of a new chapter for INA, where we aim to keep you informed, engaged, and inspired by the work we undertake and the insights we gather to support Papua New Guinea's development journey.

As we reflect on the past year, 2024 brought its share of challenges and learning opportunities. One significant event that left an indelible mark was the "Black Wednesday" incident, a sombre reminder of the resilience needed to navigate our complex social and economic landscape. Despite such trials, we have continued to push forward, driven by our shared commitment to fostering progress in PNG.

This edition highlights some of the remarkable work INA has been involved in. A standout project has been our partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in 2023 undertaking an extensive rural household, agriculture & nutrition survey across PNG. The progressive reports from IFPRI provide extensive information on the current situation for rural PNG households.

We are also pleased to share updates on various case studies, including the aspects of information financing including overtime Coral Sea Cable and the PNG National Identity Systems, which offer critical insights into national infrastructure and identity development. Furthermore, the National Capital District (NCD) Informality Diagnostic Survey was a milestone achievement, utilizing digital data collection methods by dedicated enumerators to provide valuable insights into informal sector dynamics.

Our seminar series continues to be a cornerstone of knowledge-sharing, featuring esteemed speakers such as veteran politician, farmer and professional Bart Philemon, who provided an in-depth review of PNG's governance over the last 30 years, and Professor Martin Davies from Washington and Lee University, who presented on real wage growth in PNG from 1999 to 2018. These discussions not only shed light on PNG's economic trajectory but also sparked critical dialogue on shaping a more sustainable future.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our contributors and partners who have made these achievements possible. Your support and collaboration are the driving forces behind INA's efforts to provide meaningful insights and practical solutions for PNG.

As we embark on this journey with INA's official Newsletter "*INA Gadona*", I invite you to engage with us, provide your feedback, and continue supporting our mission. Together, we can drive meaningful change and create a brighter future for Papua New Guinea.



2023 PNG Rural Households and Food Systems Survey.

In 2023, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) conducted a Rural Household and Food Systems Survey across five agro-ecological zones in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The five agro-ecological zones characterized by rainfall patterns and elevation were seasonal lowlands, non-seasonal lowlands, seasonal highlands, non-seasonal highlands and islands.

The Institute of National Affairs (INA) research teams comprising of some 80 field enumerators carried out the fieldwork in 14 provinces that represented the five agro-ecological zones. The fourteen provinces were Morobe, Chimbu/Simbu, Eastern and Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Central, East Sepik, Oro, Western, Madang, Gulf, Milne Bay, East New Britain and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB).

The survey was carried out from May to December 2023. It collected at the village and household level data that covered demographic, agricultural, economic and anthropometric data on children under 5 years to indicate nutritional status. The survey covered in total 2,699 households from 270 communities.

The survey was funded by the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT).

Presentations of the findings were provided in workshops and seminars in 2024 and further findings will be presented in 2025



Enumerators of the IFPRI survey

The 2024 informal Business Survey in National Capital District, Papua New Guinea

Between June and July 2024, the Institute of National Affairs (INA) implemented a survey on informal and formal Micro-Small to Medium sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Port Moresby to collect data on the drivers of informality and obstacles to formalization. The eight (8) enumerators carried out the survey in 29 locations across National Capital District (NCD).

The PNG National Capital District Informal Business Survey, funded by the World Bank Group (WBG) collected data from a total of 344 firms; 160 informal and 184 formal firms. Survey completion was on the 18th September 2024. All reports analyzed and were submitted to the World bank team.

Presentations on the interim findings were made in December of 2024 with the INA and at the CIMC informal Economy sectoral committee with follow up planned for 2025, with the objective to contribute to better policy to encourage development of the Micro-Small to Medium enterprises including transitioned from Informality to formality



Four of the Enumerators Informality diagnosis survey 2024

Understanding Regulatory Environment for Public Digital ICT Infrastructure Investment Projects in Papua New Guinea

Following the extensive prior case studies of of infrastructure financing over previous years, the Institute of National Affairs worked with the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) to implement the activities supporting the CIPE DRL- supported project "**Strengthening the Private Sector Resilience and Countering Digital Authoritarianism in the Pacific Islands**" under the project objective or "**Enabling the private sector to engage as a consultative stakeholder in the procurement projects in PNG**"

The project included the review of public ICT infrastructure projects and the engagement and involvement of the private sector.

INA had undergone two case studies to assess their legal and governance systems with the findings intended to raise awareness among individuals and organizations and devise appropriate strategies to address gaps and weaknesses.

The first case study is the National Identity (NID) system, which includes the NID project and the planned Digital ID Block by Department of Information Communication Technology (DICT). Recording vital information (birth, marriages, death, and related events) for citizens are legally important.

The second case study was the Coral Sea Cable Systems (CS2). Both of the case studies were presented at the Ela Beach Hotel in May 2024. Reach out for copies of the presentation and the publication by CIPE.

During the presentation, we had the pleasure of having two of our very own national professionals in the ICT space to give thier talks on respective topics in the ICT field. Crystal Kewe Shared with us the Digital transformation opportunities for youths and Winifred Kula of eNovaX touched on the ICT Cluster and the ICT trends.



Richie Yakam presenting CS2 case study



Crystal Kewe presenting Digital Transformation opportunities

RESEARCH SEMINAR ON CHILD GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL PAPUA NEW GUINEA

On 18th September 2024, the INA with IFPRI hosted a lunchtime research seminar on Child Growth Rates and Malnutrition in PNG at Grand Papua Hotel in Port Moresby. The focus of the seminar was to discuss in more detail the nutritional results of children and particularly on the levels of stunting found to be prevalent in the different communities covered during the recent 2023 Rural Households and Food Systems Survey. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) child stunting "refers to a child who is too short for his or her age and is the result of chronic or recurrent malnutrition." A key finding from the survey is that 36% of the children under the age of five sampled in the survey are stunted in their growth. It means that those children were too short for their age.

Representatives of key stakeholders from PNG government, Private Sector, Civil Society and development partners that attended also participated in the discussions following the presentation.

In the discussions Secretary for Agriculture & Livestock, Dr Bang acknowledged the findings and further stressed on the importance of all stakeholders to engage more strategically to implement programs that contribute to reduce the prevalence of stunting in the country.

Two interventions that came out of the discussions that are targeted to improve the health of children are the school-feeding programs and the first 1000 days of life concept.



The 2023 PNG Rural Household Survey collected weight and height measurements of 1,334 children from 1,008 households with at least one child under five years of age.

WHAT IS STUNTING?

Stunting, or low height for age, is a measurement of long-term, chronic malnutrition and is associated with short and long-term health and development consequences

Stunting is caused by a deficient environment in which children grow up

Deficient Environment

Stunting

Higher Incidence of Chronic Diseases

Delayed Child Development

Lower Work Capacity

Indirect outcomes

Difficult Child Birth (for stunted mothers)

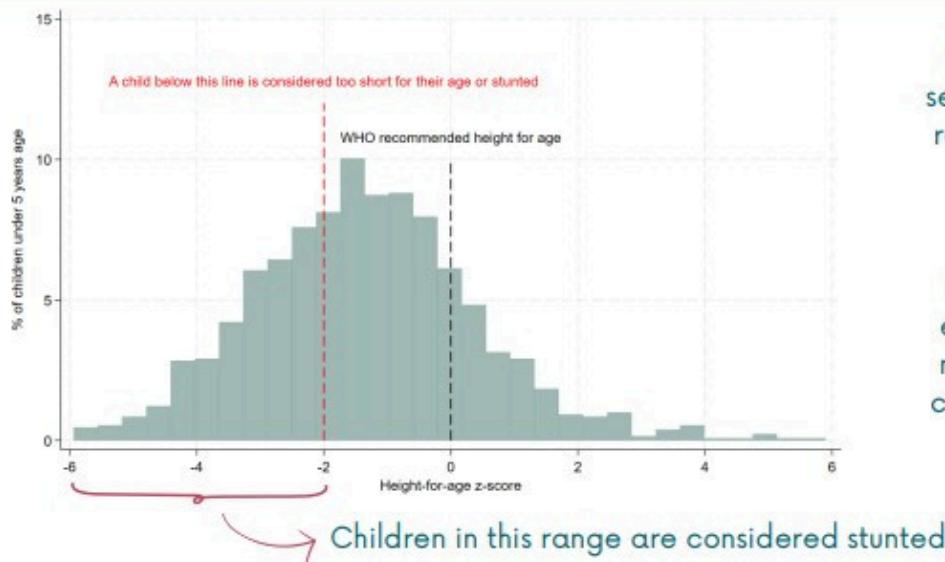
Underweight Birth (for children of stunted mothers)

Source: Leroy & Frongillo 2019

KEY FINDINGS

> 36%

of sampled children under 5 years of age are stunted in their growth
(demonstrating growth faltering)



Most sample children under seven months old are within the range of WHO-recommended growth standards.

As babies are weaned from exclusive breastfeeding (at 6 months old), average gains in child height decrease rapidly.

WHAT FACTORS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVED CHILD GROWTH ?



Greater birth spacing: Infants that are born more than 24 mo. after their immediate older sibling



Infants (age 6 mo. - 2 yrs) who eat more calories



Infants (age 6 mo. - 2 yrs) who sleep under mosquito nets



Children (2-5 yrs) who eat at least one serving of meat, fish or one egg per day



Access to improved toilet infrastructure (latrine with cover)

Real Wages Increase in PNG (in the Private Sector) over 3 decades



The INA on 29th November 2024, hosted a research seminar at the Grand Papua Hotel on real wage increases in Papua New Guinea over 3 decades by Professor Martin Davies a Senior Research Fellow with INA.

The study used Nasfund's database of employers' contributions and employees' contributions for the period 1999 to 2018 to create an annual wage panel. It then analysed this dataset to track trends in real wages in the private sector and to differentiate the impacts that shocks (positive and negative) in the economy have on different segments of the workforce.

From 1999 to 2018, the conditional real wage growth for the private sector has remained strong and has averaged around 4.5%.

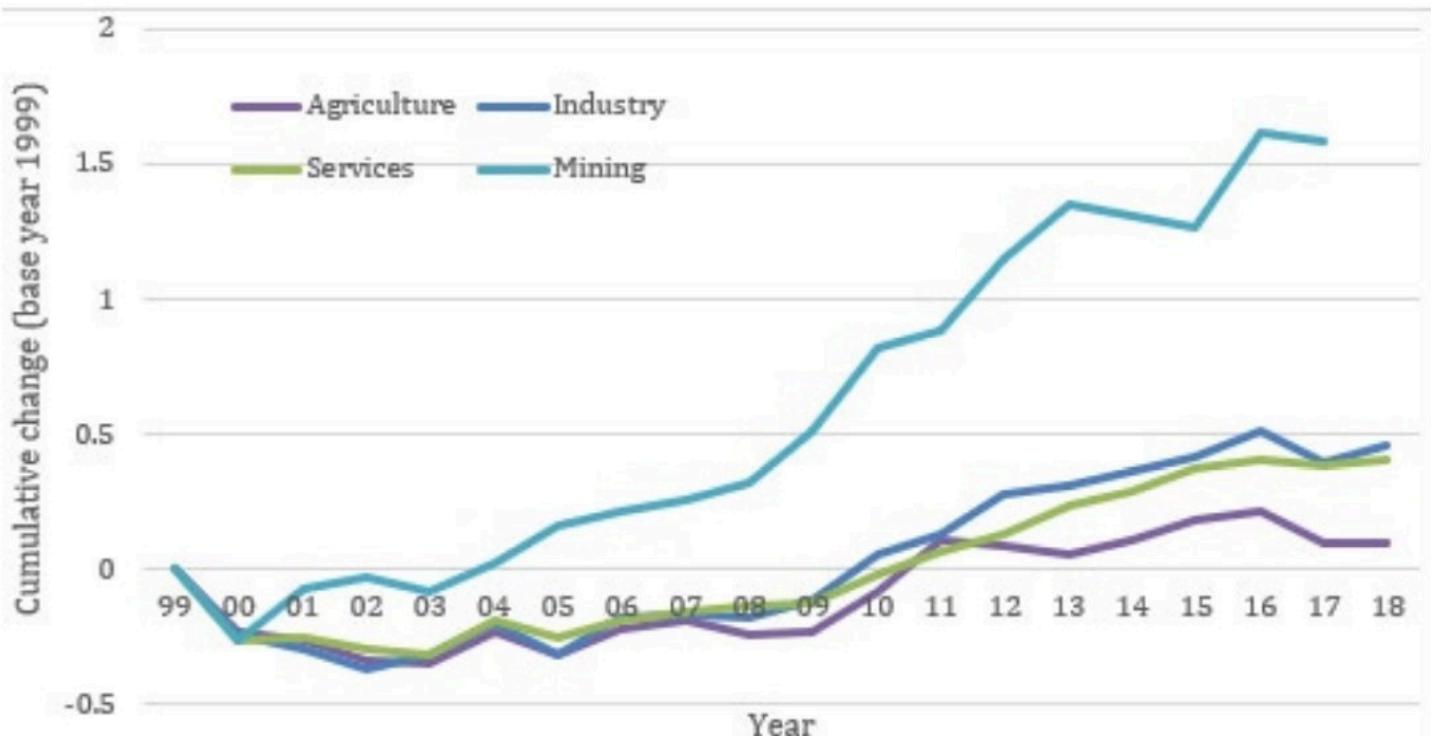
There is variation in conditional real wage growth across the different sectors. The mining sector has the highest conditional real wage growth, followed by industry and services and agriculture-the lowest.

The mining sector is the winner in the economy. The mining sector conditional real wage growth is the fastest to recover from a boom and following a bust.

The agriculture sector is the loser in the economy. The agriculture sector conditional real wage growth is most negatively affected during a bust and lags behind the other sectors even during a boom.

Overall, and at the sector level, the conditional real wage growth has followed the pro-cyclical pattern of busts and booms in the economy. It falls or slows down during busts and rises during booms.

Cumulative growth in conditional real wage by sector, over period 1999 - 2018



*Nasfund - The National Superannuation Fund Limited (Nasfund) is the largest private sector superannuation fund in Papua New Guinea.

INA & CIMC Retreat at Loloata Island: Reflecting on 2024, Focus on 2025

The Institute of National Affairs (INA) and the Consultative Implementation & Monitoring Council (CIMC) held a productive retreat at Loloata Island Resort, arriving at 11 AM for a day of reflection and strategic discussions.

The morning and afternoon sessions, facilitated by Media & Communications Officer Chonginan Moang, focused on "The Big Focus"—reviewing achievements, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring alignment with our Vision and Mission. We also provided awards for performances within the organisation.



Beyond the discussions, team members engaged in recreational activities, including volleyball, kayaking, and mountain hiking, fostering camaraderie and teamwork. Remarks from Paul Barker (INA) and Wallis Yakam (CIMC).

As we bid farewell to 2024, this retreat served as a valuable opportunity to realign our goals and set our sights on a promising 2025.

INA Updates

We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's Independence on 16th September 2025. The INA will be conducting and participating in various forums and events to celebrate, but also reflect upon this period, its opportunities and challenges, and the path forward. The 50th anniversary year will commence from this September, so that's the appropriate time to host our contribution. But in this vein we'd recommend that you read the outcomes and papers from the 40th Anniversary Symposium we hosted in early 2016, which included a strong team of experienced policy makers from the time of Independence, as many of their conclusions and recommendations remain highly pertinent. Sadly, several of our distinguished participants have since passed away, including Sir Mekere Morauta, Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Sir Brown Bai, Sir Paul Songo, Josepha Kiris, Paul Arnold, Kilyali Kalit and John Toguata, as well as our co-convener, Anthony Hughes.

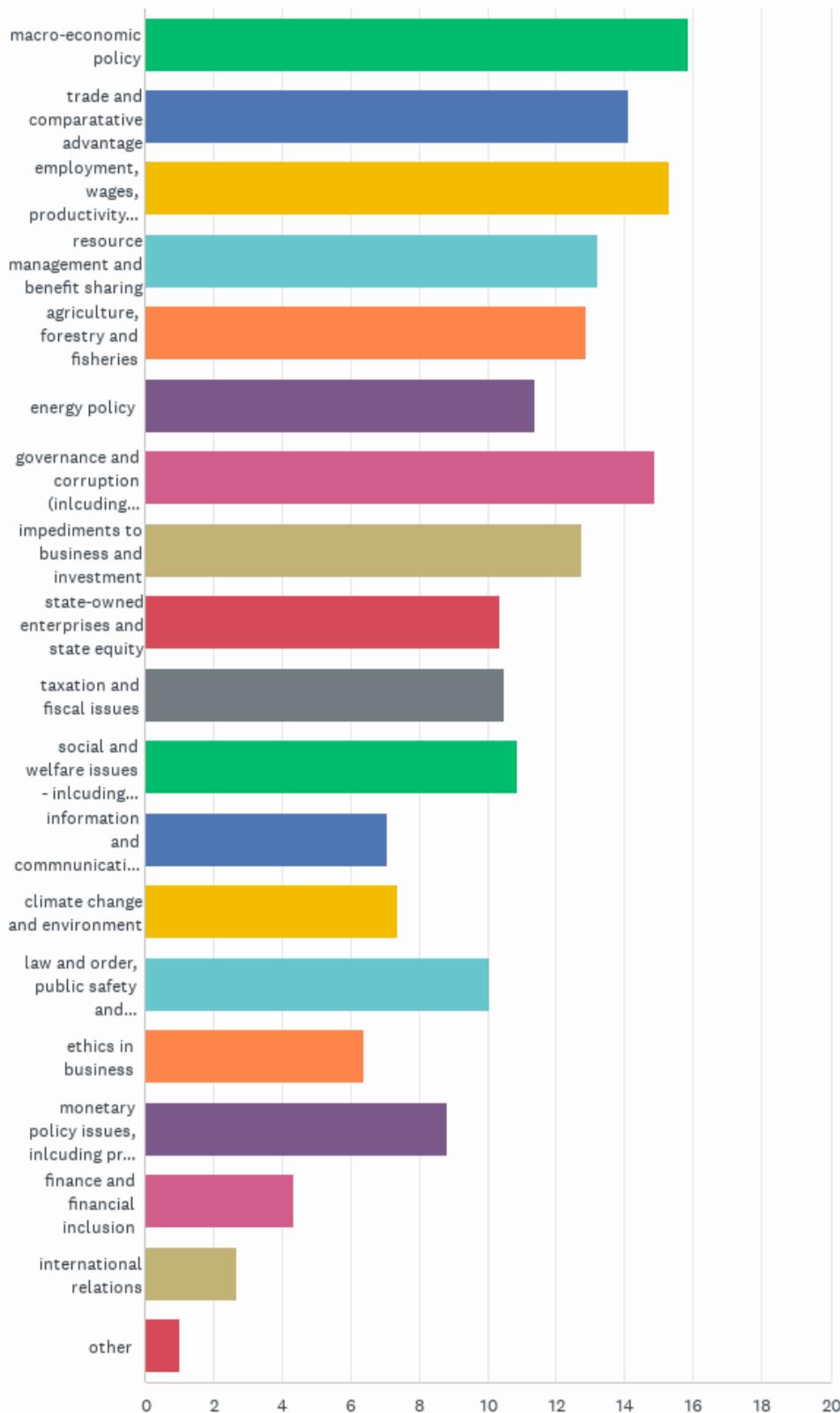
2025 commenced with the INA undertaking its task of preparing the country analysis for the two-yearly Bertelsmann Transformation Index report (BTI) on governance, democracy and business environment, and in March we've commenced the 2026 Open Budget Survey (both reports will be released at the start of 2026, as part of the global reporting).

Having conducted extensive work in 2024 on issues related to conflict, economic empowerment, resource financing and ICT, partly funded through US institutions, it had been scheduled for the INA to conduct further studies/surveys and consultations in 2025 on these issues, including an agricultural and skills survey in Hela province in early 2025. However, with the discontinuation of USAID and other institutions (or their funding) such as USIP and NDI, Asian Foundation and others by the new US Administration, and with it the discontinuation of the USG Peace Project, and regional economic development project, the INA's funding and activities in this area have had to be substantially curtailed, for the time being at least.

A tentative program of activities, (excluding most research activities) for the year is provided on our website, with some material on our Facebook and Linked-In pages, (www.inapng.com, etc); this will be constantly updated. It may also be noted that the CIMC program of forums will commence in April 2025, with the co-hosted Agriculture Forum in the second week of April in Lae, and the rolled-over 2024 National Development Forum, with a focus on law and order and employment the following week in NCD (at APEC Haus), and with the 2025 50th Anniversary Regional and National Development Forums commencing thereafter, once funding is secured.

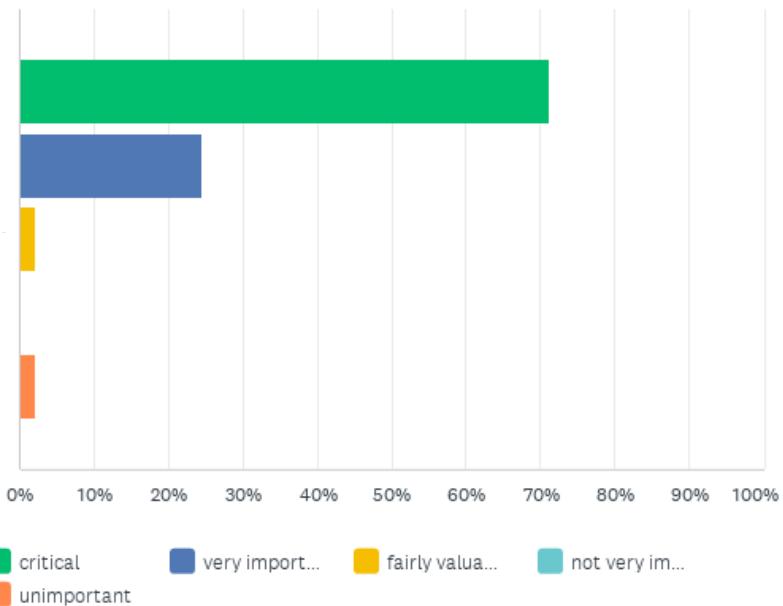
INA 2024 - 2025 Stakeholder Survey

Stakeholders ratings on issues INA should focus more on in it's research, analysis and dialogue



INA 2024 - 2025 Stakeholder Survey

Importance of Papua New Guinea having an independent public policy research/ Think tank (like INA)



INA's rating on informing the wider public on public policy issues affecting Papua New Guinea

3.9★
average rating

Level of Engagement with stakeholders

3.4★
average rating