

GRAUN · PAPUA NEW GUINEA EDITION

Protect Our *Land*

A free guide for clans and landowners in
Papua New Guinea: before you sign a lease or
resource deal, and how to keep your land

Customary land · clans & ILGs · land registration · SABLs ·
logging, mining & oil and gas
with PNG contacts for help

Blake Soifua · Projects Possible

@projectspssible · pasifikaplanning.com · Free to share



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Halo, wantok

Our land holds our names, our graves, our gardens and our stories. It came to us from our ancestors, and it is meant to go to the generations who come after.

In Papua New Guinea, almost all land is **customary land**, held by clans under custom. But land can still be lost: through a long lease signed by a few people, a logging or plantation deal, or papers no one explained to the clan.

This guide explains, in plain words, how land works in PNG, what to check before anyone signs, the red flags to watch for, and where to get free help.

How to use this guide

- ◆ **Short on time?** Read “Someone offered us a lease” (page 7) and use the one-page **Lease Check** (page 32).
- ◆ **Offered a logging, oil palm or SABL deal?** Read the SABL pages in Section 2 first.
- ◆ **Print it, share it, read it aloud** in Tok Pisin or tok ples at your clan or village meeting.

TOK PISIN

Halo

hello

TOK PISIN

Tenkyu tru

thank you very much

TOK PISIN

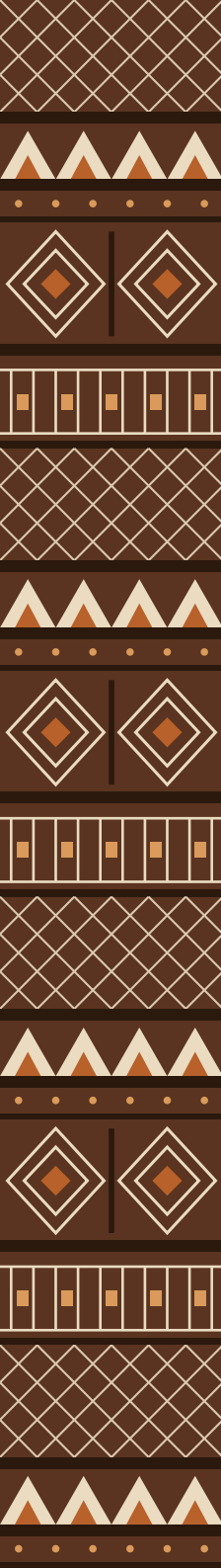
Tok ples

your own local language

Please note: General information, not legal advice. Talk to the Public Solicitor, DLPP or a lawyer before signing. Laws, fees and contacts change. Always check with the official office.

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1

Before you sign a long lease

A lease is a promise that lasts longer than most of us will. It is worth slowing down for.

“We do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we hold it for our grandchildren.”

A saying shared across many cultures

WHY IT MATTERS

A 99-year lease is about four generations

In PNG, a Special Agriculture and Business Lease (SABL) can run for up to 99 years. If a lease is signed today for 99 years, the people who get the land back may be your great-great-grandchildren. Most of the people in the room when it is signed will never see it end.



Money today, land tomorrow

Some offers pay a large sum now. Ask what the land will be worth to your family in 20, 50 and 99 years, not only this year.

The land may come back changed

Buildings, cleared forest, fill, or pollution can stay after a lease ends. The lease should say who fixes what.

The investor can change

Unless the lease stops it, the lease can be sold or passed on to people you have never met.

Families grow

A family of 20 today may be 200 later. Think about where your children will live, farm and be buried.

This is not about fear. A **fair** lease can be a blessing. The goal is to understand the deal fully, decide together, and get it in writing.

Eight things to check before you sign

1 Who gets the land back, and in what state?

The lease should say the land returns to your family, and in what condition: cleared of rubbish, chemicals and dangerous buildings.

2 Buildings and improvements at the end

Who owns houses, hotels, roads or crops when the lease ends? Do you have to pay for them? Can the investor remove them, or must they leave them?

3 Selling or subletting without you

Can the investor **assign** (sell) the lease or **sublease** it to someone else? Ask for a clause that needs your written consent first.

4 Rent reviews and inflation

Fixed rent loses value every year. Ask for rent reviews every few years, linked to market value or the cost of living.

5 Premium or yearly rent?

A **premium** is a one-off payment at the start. **Annual rent** keeps coming. Know how much of each, and who receives them.

6 The whole family agrees

Has the whole clan (or ILG, with all its members) had a real say, including women, young people and members away from home? Record it in writing.

7 Independent advice

Get advice from someone who works **only for your family**: the Public Solicitor, DLPP or your own lawyer. Not the investor's lawyer.

8 Everything in writing, copies kept

Promises made out loud are not in the lease. Get the full lease in writing and signed, with a copy for the family. Keep copies in more than one safe place.

Someone offered us a lease: what now?

1 Don't sign on the spot

A fair offer will still be there next week. Say: “Thank you. Our family needs time to talk and get advice.”

2 Gather the family

Call a proper meeting of all owners or their representatives. Include elders, women, youth and family away from home (a video call works). Write down who came and what was agreed.

3 Get a copy to keep

Ask for the full draft lease, maps and plans, in writing. Ask for a translation into Tok Pisin or tok ples if you need one.

4 Check with DLPP

Ask DLPP if this lease or SABL is allowed, and get free help from the Public Solicitor (Section 3).

5 Get free legal help

Contact the Public Solicitor, or a lawyer who works only for your clan.

6 Compare offers

Ask what similar land earns. Look at other options too: farming, a homestay, a shorter lease or a joint venture.

7 Negotiate

Every clause can be discussed: the term, rent reviews, jobs for family, return of the land. Ask for changes in writing.

8 Sign only when you are sure

Everyone who must sign has read it or had it explained. Keep a signed copy in your family land folder (page 28).

WATCH OUT

Red flags

If you see one of these, stop and get advice before you go any further.

Pressure to sign fast

“Sign today or the deal is gone.”

Real partners give you time to get advice.

Cash upfront to one person

Money or gifts given to one “big man”, one relative or one ‘representative’ before the family has agreed.

Papers only in English

Not explained in Tok Pisin or tok ples. Everyone signing should understand every page.

No copy left with you

If they take the papers away after you sign, you have no proof of what you agreed. Always keep a copy.

Middlemen and ‘fixers’

Someone says they represent the family but is paid by the investor. Ask who pays them.

Promises not in the lease

“Of course we'll hire your sons.” If a promise matters, it must be written into the lease.

If you feel pressured, you can simply say: “We will not sign anything until our whole clan has agreed and a lawyer has checked it.” That is your right.

Questions to ask the investor

Write down the answers, the date, and who answered. A good partner will answer clearly.

- 1 Who exactly are you? Can we see your company registration?
- 2 What will you build or grow, and on how much of the land?
- 3 Why do you need this many years?
- 4 How much is the rent, how often is it paid, and when will it go up?
- 5 Is there a premium? Who receives it?
- 6 Who can you sell or sublease the lease to? Will you need our written consent?
- 7 What happens to the buildings when the lease ends?
- 8 How will you protect water, reefs, forest, graves and sacred places?
- 9 How many jobs and training places for our family, in writing?
- 10 What happens if you stop paying or leave?
- 11 Will you pay for our independent legal advice?
- 12 Can we see a lease you made with another family, and speak to them?

Red flags in PNG land deals

These are the patterns found again and again in PNG. If you see one, stop and get free legal help first.

A “lease-lease-back” or SABL

The clan leases land to the State, which leases it to a company for up to 99 years. Many SABLs were found to have no real landowner consent.

One “big man” signs for everyone

Land belongs to the whole clan. A signature from one leader, agent or landowner company is not the same as the clan agreeing.

ILG leaders signing alone

An ILG’s committee must follow its constitution. Ask for the meeting minutes and who voted.

Logging dressed up as farming

Many SABLs were used to clear and export forest, with the “agriculture project” never planted.

Unclear benefit-sharing

No written plan for who gets royalties, rent, jobs or equity, and how it reaches every family.

Papers not explained in Tok Pisin or tok ples

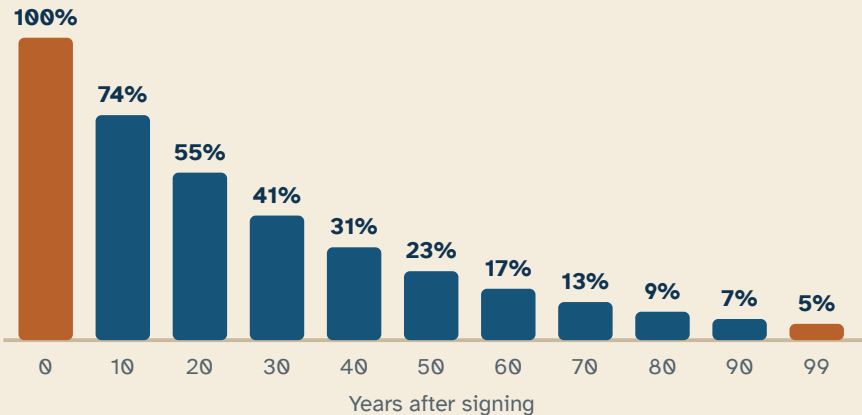
Every page should be read and explained in a language the whole clan understands, before anyone signs.

Sources: SABL Commission of Inquiry reports (2013); The National; ABC News (2014); devpolicy.org DP86 (2019).

AN ILLUSTRATION, NOT A PREDICTION

How a fixed rent shrinks over 99 years

Imagine a lease where the rent is **fixed** and never goes up, while prices rise **3% a year**. The bars show what that same rent can buy, as a **percentage of what it buys today**.



74%

after 10 years

23%

after 50 years

5%

after 99 years: about one-twentieth

What helps: rent reviews every 3 to 5 years, linked to the market value of the land or the cost of living; a share of income from the business; and a shorter term with an option to renew.

How we worked it out: 100% divided by 1.03 for each year. Real inflation goes up and down, and is sometimes higher than 3%. This simple example only shows the idea.

Glossary: lease words in plain English

Lease

A written agreement that lets someone use your land for a set time, in return for rent. The land stays yours.

Term

How long the lease lasts, for example 30 years.

Premium

A one-off sum paid at the start of a lease, separate from yearly rent.

Rent review

A set time when the rent is checked and changed, for example every 5 years.

Assignment

When the tenant sells or hands the whole lease to someone else.

Consent

Formal permission, best given in writing.

Lessor / Lessee

Lessor: the side giving the lease (the clan or ILG). Lessee: the side getting it (the tenant or investor).

Renewal / option to renew

A right to extend the lease when it ends. Check who has the choice, and on what rent.

Annual rent

Money paid every year for the use of the land.

Inflation

Prices rising over time, so the same money buys less each year.

Sublease

When the tenant rents out part or all of the land to another person.

Covenant / clause

A promise or rule written into the lease, such as “keep the land clean”.

Glossary (continued)

Improvements

Things added to the land: houses, buildings, roads, fences, trees and crops.

Default / breach

When one side breaks a promise in the lease, such as not paying rent.

Customary land

Land held by families, clans or villages under custom, not bought and sold.

Registration

Recording a lease or title with DLPP, so it is legally recognised and protected.

Mortgage

Using a lease or land as security for a loan. If the loan is not repaid, the bank may take the lease.

Independent advice

Advice from someone who works only for you, with no link to the investor.

Reversion / surrender

When the land goes back to the owners at the end, or early by agreement.

Forfeiture / termination

Ending the lease early because of a serious breach, following the steps in the lease.

Freehold

Land owned outright that can be bought and sold.

Survey plan

An official map showing the exact borders and size of the land.

Joint venture

When owners and an investor run a business together and share the profits.

Witness

A person who watches you sign and signs too. Ideally, someone the family trusts.

Don't understand a word in your lease? Circle it and ask DLPP or the Public Solicitor to explain it. There is no shame in asking. The people who wrote it should be able to explain it simply.

Ask for a fairer lease

1 Shorter terms

Say 20 to 30 years with an option to renew on new terms, instead of 99 years at once.

2 Regular rent reviews

Every 3 to 5 years, linked to market value or the cost of living.

3 A share of the income

A small percentage of turnover or profit, as well as the base rent.

4 Jobs and training, in writing

Set numbers of jobs, apprenticeships or supply contracts for the family.

5 Consent for any transfer

No assignment or sublease without the owners' written consent.

6 Return the land well

A plan and a bond (money held back) to clean up and restore the land.

7 Protect sacred places

Graves, churches, springs, reefs, gardens and sacred sites stay out of the lease.

8 Joint ventures

Owners put in the land as their share of a business and receive a share of the profits and a say in decisions. Get expert advice.

Deciding together

Land decisions belong to the family, not to one person. Our customs of talking together (clan and village meetings) are a strength here.

Who must agree?

In PNG, land belongs to the clan, not one leader. If you have an ILG, its constitution says how decisions are made. Ask DLPP or a lawyer exactly who must sign.

Include everyone

Women, young people, people with disabilities and family away from home are owners too. Make sure they can speak and be heard.

Write it down

Keep minutes: the date, who was there, what was offered, what was decided, and who will act. Have them signed.

Share the benefits fairly

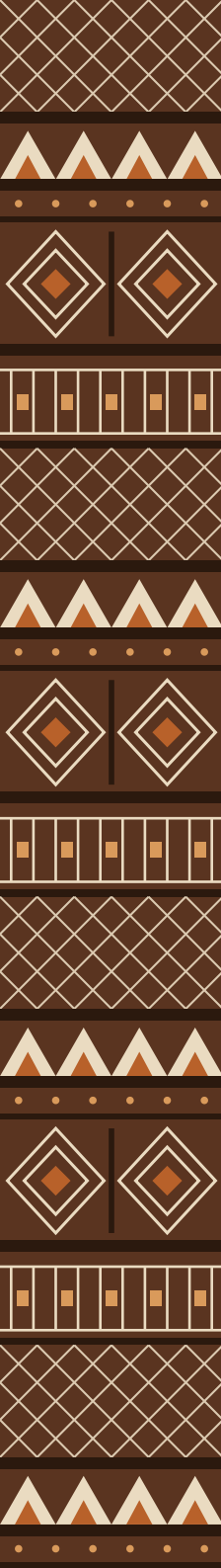
Agree how rent will be shared or used (school fees, a church, a family fund) before the money comes.

Explain it in Tok Pisin

If the offer is in English, ask for every page to be read and explained in Tok Pisin or your tok ples.

It's okay to say no

“No”, “not yet” or “only for a shorter time” are all respectful answers.



2

How land works in Papua New Guinea

Customary land, clans and ILGs, registering land, SABLs, land disputes, and logging, mining and oil and gas.

Every fact here comes from an official, legal or research source, listed on the page and at the back. Where we could not verify something, we left it out.

Customary land & clans

Graun

~97%

of land has been
customary land

Clan

owns land under custom

86%

customary share after
SABLs, per the Inquiry

In PNG, most land is **customary land**, owned by clans and other landowning groups under their own custom. The SABL Commission of Inquiry described PNG as having **97% of the land being customary land**.

The same Inquiry warned that abuse of the SABL process cut the land held under customary tenure **from 97% to 86%**. That is land families have lost control of, often for 99 years, without ever “selling” it.

- ◆ The **Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP)** handles State leases, ILGs and customary land registration.
- ◆ Customary land can be brought into the formal system in two ways: as an **Incorporated Land Group (ILG)**, and by **voluntary customary land registration**. Both are explained next.

Check with: **DLPP**, Eda Tano Haus, Waigani Drive, Port Moresby · (+675) 301 3246 · dlpp.gov.pg

Sources: SABL Commission of Inquiry, Final Report (Numapo, 2013) and Report (COISABL2013c); dlpp.gov.pg; PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5 (2021).

Incorporated Land Groups (ILGs) *ILG*

Under the **Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974**, a clan, tribe or other customary group can be recognised as a legal body, an **ILG**, that can hold, manage and deal with land.

The **Land Groups Incorporation (Amendment) Act 2009** added stricter rules. It was passed in 2009 but only came into effect in **2012**. Groups incorporated under the old law were given **five years** to reincorporate.

- ◆ The group appoints a **Management Committee** and a **Dispute Settlement Authority (DSA)** at a meeting of all members, and adopts a **constitution**.
- ◆ The application includes meeting minutes, a **list of members with birth certificates**, a list of property (land, rivers, mountains) and a **sketch map**.
- ◆ It is endorsed by the **Provincial Lands Adviser**, lodged with the Registrar of ILGs at DLPP, and advertised for objections. There is **no application fee**.

Protect your clan: make sure every family is on the member list, and keep a copy of the constitution, minutes and certificate in your land folder.

Sources: Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974 (FAOLEX png20852); PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5 (2021); devpolicy.org DP86 (Filer, 2019).

Registering customary land

Taitel

Since the **Land Registration (Amendment) Act 2009**, an ILG can choose to register a portion of its land and receive a title. This is called **Voluntary Customary Land Registration (VCLR)**. It is voluntary: the ILG decides which land, if any, to register.

- ◆ The ILG applies to DLPP's **Customary Land Leases Division**, with the sketch map from incorporation. There is **no application fee**, but survey costs can be high.
- ◆ The application needs a **registration plan** describing the boundaries, which in practice means a land investigation report and a survey plan.
- ◆ A public notice gives people up to **90 days** to object (Section 34). Boundary and ownership disputes go through mediation and the land courts.

Think carefully: once land is registered, it can be leased formally. That can bring income, but it also makes it easier to tie land up for a long time. Decide together, and get advice first.

Sources: PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5 (Nao, 2021); devpolicy.org DP86 (Filer, 2019).

KEY WARNING

SABLs: the lease-lease-back

SABL

99 yrs

maximum SABL term

5.2m ha

of customary land in
SABLs inquired into

400+

SABLs issued since the
1980s

Under **sections 11 and 102 of the Land Act 1996**, customary landowners lease their land to the State, and the State leases it back as a **Special Agriculture and Business Lease (SABL)**, often to a landowner company that then subleases to a developer.

- ◆ The term of a SABL **must not exceed 99 years**, and no rent is payable to the State.
- ◆ The Inquiry found that more than **400 SABLs** had been issued over customary land since the early 1980s.
- ◆ Many were used for “agriculture” projects over virgin forest, where the real business was logging.

If someone mentions a **lease-lease-back**, an SABL or a “forest clearance” for a farm project, read the next page and get free legal help before anyone signs.

Sources: SABL Commission of Inquiry Report (2013), citing Land Act 1996 ss 11, 102; ABC News, 12 Feb 2014.

KEY WARNING

What the SABL Inquiry found *2011-2013*

A **Commission of Inquiry** into SABLs was set up on **21 July 2011**, after a public outcry. It was asked to look at 75 SABLs (later 77) covering about **5.2 million hectares** of customary land, mostly leased for 99 years. Its final reports were presented in **2013**.

Little real consent

Of the 42 leases reported on, only **four** had genuine landowner consent and a viable agricultural project.

Leases should be revoked

The Commission recommended that **66 flawed leases** be revoked. Years later, NGOs were still calling for action.

Signed without knowing

In one case, officials and landowner company executives signed approvals that leased over **2 million hectares** in Western Province.

No room to live

Some leases failed to leave reasonable access for **hunting, fishing and gardens**, the things families need to live.

The lesson: a lease is only as good as the clan's real, informed agreement. Ask who signed, whether the whole clan agreed, and get every page explained.

Sources: SABL Commission of Inquiry, Final Report (Numapo, June 2013), Foreword; The National, "SABL policy 'failed miserably'"; ABC News, 12 Feb 2014.

Land disputes: mediation & land courts

Kot

Disputes over who owns customary land, boundaries or user rights follow a set path under the **Land Disputes Settlement Act**:

- ◆ **1 • Mediation first.** The dispute is registered with the Village Court clerk and the Land Mediation Secretariat. There are **three mandatory attempts at mediation**, by a gazetted local land mediator.
- ◆ **2 • Agreement approved.** If mediation works, the agreement goes to the District Court, where a magistrate and two mediators confirm it.
- ◆ **3 • Local Land Court.** If mediation fails, the matter goes to a **Local Land Court**, a magistrate sitting with two mediators.
- ◆ **4 • Provincial Land Court, then National Court.** A party unhappy with the decision can apply for review (a fee applies), first to the **Provincial Land Court**, then to the National Court.

Disputes inside an ILG go first to the group's own **Dispute Settlement Authority**.

Land courts are run by the **Magisterial Service** · Erskine St, Port Moresby · +675 321 7661 · magisterialservices.gov.pg

Sources: PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5 (2021); Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974 Part IV; magisterialservices.gov.pg.

Mining, oil & gas, and logging

Risos

Mining: minerals belong to the State

Under the **Mining Act 1992 s 5**, minerals are the property of the State. But landholders keep the surface and are owed **compensation** for loss and damage (s 154).

No entry until compensation

A miner may not enter or occupy the land until compensation is **agreed or determined** (s 155). Payments just “for permitting entry” are not allowed (s 154(4)).

Oil & gas: royalty and equity

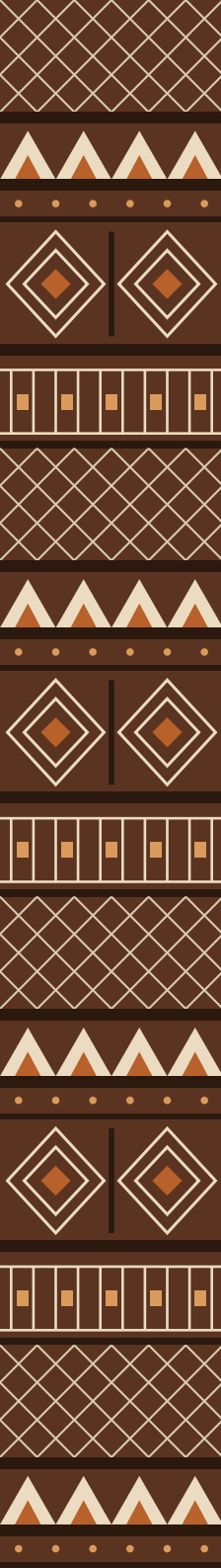
The **Oil and Gas Act 1998** prefers land groups to receive the “royalty benefit” and “equity benefit”. Developers must do social mapping and landowner identification.

Logging: Forestry Act 1991

Timber rights are transferred to the State under a **forest management agreement**, then allocated to a logging company. ILGs were meant to show the owners’ informed consent.

Before you agree: ask who was identified as landowners, how benefits reach every family, and whether the whole clan was consulted. Get the agreement in writing and get free legal help.

Sources: Mining Act 1992 ss 5, 154, 155 (mra.gov.pg); devpolicy.org DP86 (Filer, 2019) on the Oil and Gas Act 1998 and Forestry Act 1991 s 57.

A decorative vertical border on the left side of the page, featuring a series of repeating geometric patterns in brown, white, and orange. The patterns include diamonds, triangles, and squares.

3

Where to go for help

The most important part of this guide: “I need help with X, so go to Y.”

Contacts below were checked in October 2026.
Where a site was down, that is noted. If a number doesn’t work, ask at the office or try again later.

Papua New Guinea

I NEED HELP WITH

Free legal help

Public Solicitor's Office

Sir Buri Kidu Haus, Waigani • (675) 325 8866 / 325 8656 • branches in most provinces •
publicsolicitor.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

Find a lawyer

PNG Law Society

Level 2, Newmont Haus, Hunter St • +675 321 7344 •
admin@pnglawsociety.org.pg • pnglawsociety.org.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

State leases, SABLS, ILGs, land registration

Dept of Lands & Physical Planning (DLPP)

Eda Tano Haus, Waigani Drive, Port Moresby • (+675) 301 3246 • customer service (+675) 301 3294 •
dlpp.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

Land mediation & land courts

Magisterial Service

Erskine St, Port Moresby • +675 321 7661 / 321 4448 •
info@magisterialservices.gov.pg •
magisterialservices.gov.pg

Before you call: have your ILG certificate, lease or SABL number, survey map and any papers ready. Write down the date, who you spoke to and what they said.

Papua New Guinea

I NEED HELP WITH

Customary ownership & land titles

Land Commission of PNG (was Land Titles Commission)

Hears customary ownership, tenure conversion and related title matters (LTC & NLC merged under the Land Commission Act 2022). Level 3, West New Britain Haus, Independence Drive, Port Moresby · (675) 301 2803 / 5766 · landcommission.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

Community land, environment & resource rights

CELCOR (Centre for Environmental Law & Community Rights)

Public-interest legal help on customary land, environment and resource rights. Website currently shows an error (Oct 2026). Contacts from search results (unconfirmed, website down, Oct 2026): Office 10B, Ori Lavi Haus, Turumu St, Boroko · (+675) 3234509 / 3234237 · info@celcor.org · celcor.org

I NEED HELP WITH

Forestry, timber rights & logging permits

PNG Forest Authority (PNGFA)

Manages forestry, timber rights and logging permits (including forest management agreements). Website not working right now (Oct 2026) · pngfa.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

ILG applications in your province

Your provincial lands office

Contact your provincial lands office or Provincial Lands Adviser — they endorse ILG applications before they go to DLPP. Ask DLPP which office covers your province.

Note: The old Land Titles Commission site is gone; use the Land Commission of PNG instead. CELCOR and PNGFA are listed so you know who does what, even while their sites are down.

Papua New Guinea

I NEED HELP WITH

**A complaint
about a public
official or office**

Ombudsman Commission

Ombudsman Haus, Champion Parade, Port Moresby ·
(675) 308 2600 · info@ombudsman.gov.pg ·
ombudsman.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

**Logging,
forests &
customary land
campaigns**

ACT NOW!

PO Box 5218, Boroko, NCD · +675 7715 9197 ·
info@actnowpng.org · actnowpng.org

I NEED HELP WITH

**Land law
reform**

Constitutional & Law Reform Commission

Paragon Building, 2nd Floor, Kumul Ave, Waigani ·
(675) 325 2840 / 325 2862 · clrc.gov.pg

I NEED HELP WITH

**Land research
& policy**

PNG National Research Institute

Cnr Goro-Kaeaga Rd & Waigani Dr · +675 326 0300 /
326 0061 · pngnri@pngnri.org · pngnri.org

Public Solicitor branches: Lae (675) 472 1092 · Madang 422 1355 · Mt Hagen
535 1035 · Kokopo 982 9629 · Wewak 456 1610 · Alotau 641 1015 · Buka 973
9990. Full list on the website.

Your family land folder

If the papers are lost, the family can lose its proof. Keep one folder for each piece of land.

1 The lease

Every page, signed, plus any changes (variations) and renewals.

2 Title or land record

Registration certificate, land register extract or ILG certificate, SABL or State lease numbers.

3 Survey map

The official plan showing borders and size.

4 Rent receipts

Every payment: date, amount and who received it.

5 Family / clan agreements

Meeting minutes, consent forms and agreements on sharing rent.

6 Official letters

All letters and emails to and from DLPP, the land court or the investor.

7 Owner IDs & family tree

A list of owners and heirs, with ID copies and contact details.

8 Photos of the land

Dated photos of boundaries, buildings and the land's condition at the start.

Prove your clan's connection

Lain

Land cases and ILG applications often come down to paper: who the clan members are, and where the boundaries are.

1 • Birth certificates

An ILG application needs a **list of members with birth certificates**.

Apply through the PNG Civil and Identity Registry.

2 • The sketch map

Draw the clan's land, rivers, mountains and boundaries. The National Mapping Bureau can help with the ILG sketch map.

3 • The ILG papers

Keep the constitution, meeting minutes, member list and Certificate of Incorporation together.

4 • Mediation records

Keep every land mediation agreement and court decision. They can settle boundaries for years.

Write it down now, while elders can still tell the story: names, clan lines, boundaries, gardens and sacred sites.

Sources: PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5 (2021).

Scan it, store it, share it

1 • Scan with your phone

Use a free scanning app, the “Scan documents” option in iPhone Notes, or the scan button in the Google Drive app. Scan every page, flat and in good light.

2 • Store it privately

Keep a private shared folder in Google Drive or iCloud. Share it only with trusted family, never publicly.

3 • Name files clearly

Year-month-day, then land, then document: **2026-10-14_Clan-ILG_Lease-signed.pdf**

4 • Two or more keepers

Give access to at least two trusted people, one at home and one overseas, so the papers survive any one loss.

Originals: keep them dry in a sealed waterproof bag, in a cyclone-safe and flood-safe place, off the floor. Make copies before lending papers to anyone.

Key dates tracker

Date	Land / lease	What happens
Start date		
Rent review 1		
Rent review 2		
Renewal deadline		
End date		

FILL IN & KEEP

Our Land Record

Name of land / plot

Village, district, province

Clan / sub-clan / ILG name

ILG cert. / lease / SABL no.

Size (hectares)

Survey plan number

The lease

Lessee (tenant) name

Their contact

Start date

End date

Rent amount & how often

Rent review dates

Premium paid? To whom?

Who receives the rent

Our people

Folder keeper 1 (home)

Folder keeper 2 (overseas)

DLPP / provincial lands contact

Lawyer / legal aid contact

Where the originals are kept

Notes

Lease Check

Tick every box **before** anyone signs. If you can't tick one, stop and ask for help (Section 3).

- ☐ We have **not** been rushed. We took time to think and talk.
- ☐ The **whole family** (all owners or their representatives) has met and agreed, and it is written down.
- ☐ We have a **full written copy** of the lease, in a language we understand.
- ☐ We checked with **DLPP** that the lease or SABL is properly done.
- ☐ We got **independent legal advice** (not the investor's lawyer).
- ☐ We know **how long** the lease is, and when it ends or can be renewed.
- ☐ The rent has **reviews** at least every 3 to 5 years.
- ☐ We know about any **premium**, and who receives the money.
- ☐ The tenant **cannot sell or sublease** without our written consent.
- ☐ It says what happens to **buildings** and the **land's condition** at the end.
- ☐ **Sacred places**, graves and water are protected.
- ☐ Promises (jobs, roads, school fees) are **written in the lease**.
- ☐ We will **keep copies** in our land folder, held by two or more people.

General information, not legal advice. Talk to the Public Solicitor, DLPP or a lawyer before signing.

A note for the diaspora

Whether you are in Port Moresby, Lae, Brisbane, Cairns or Auckland, you can protect home land from far away.

You are an owner too

In most places, family members away from home keep their rights in family land. Stay in touch and stay informed.

Join by video

Ask for family meetings by video call, so you can hear and speak. Ask for minutes.

Help read the papers

If you read English well, help elders understand, in Tok Pisin or tok ples. But leave the decisions to the family.

Fund advice, not pressure

Offer to pay for independent legal advice or a valuation, rather than pushing for one choice.

Be a buyer

Buy family products, and help with online sales, shipping and marketing abroad.

Be a keeper

Hold a copy of the land folder safely overseas.

THANK YOU

Tenkyu tru

Our land is not only something we own. It is who we are. Take your time, talk together, ask questions, and choose what is best for the generations still to come.

This guide is free. Please **print it, share it, and read it aloud** at your family, church and village meetings.



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General information, not legal advice. Talk to the Public Solicitor, DLPP or a lawyer before signing. Information was checked in October 2026, but laws and contacts change. Please confirm with the official office.

Sources & notes

Customary land & SABLs

Commission of Inquiry into SABL, Final Report (J. Numapo, June 2013) and report COISABL2013c (pngiforests.org / cloudfront); The National, “SABL policy ‘failed miserably’”; ABC News, 12 Feb 2014, “PNG’s land scandal inquiry names an Australian-led company”.

ILGs & registration

Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974 (FAOLEX png20852); L. Nao, PNG NRI Spotlight Vol 14 Issue 5, May 2021; C. Filer, “Two steps forward, two steps back”, Devpolicy Discussion Paper 86, 2019.

Resource deals

Mining Act 1992 ss 5, 154, 155 (mra.gov.pg); Devpolicy DP86 on the Oil and Gas Act 1998 and Forestry Act 1991.

Tok Pisin

Ministry for Pacific Peoples (NZ), Papua Niugini Tok Pisin Language Guide, 2026.

Help contacts

publicsolicitor.gov.pg/contact-us; pnglawsociety.org.pg/contact-us; dlpp.gov.pg; magisterialservices.gov.pg; landcommission.gov.pg (Land Commission / former LTC); ombudsman.gov.pg/contact-us; actnowpng.org/contact; clrc.gov.pg/contact-us; pngnri.org; CELCOR (celcor.org down Oct 2026; search-listed contacts unconfirmed); PNGFA (pngfa.gov.pg not loading contact content Oct 2026).

Websites and contact details were checked in October 2026. CELCOR and PNG Forest Authority websites were not working when checked (Oct 2026); they are listed with a note. The Land Titles Commission was merged into the Land Commission of PNG. The rent example is an illustration only. Points we could not verify from an official source were left out. Free to share; please don’t sell it.