



# Brewing climate resilience in the coffee sector



Farmers are highly vulnerable to changes in the climate because they rely on the land and environment for their livelihoods – compounding the challenges faced by smallholders. Papua New Guinea's rural population are the custodians of their land and still practise traditional farming methods passed down through generations. These practices are built around sustainable land management and environmental protection. However, farming communities have started to notice unpredictable changes in weather patterns, which threaten their traditional gardening practices - 'gardening' is a term commonly used for smallholders producing backyard agriculture. The rainy seasons are more erratic, disrupting cropping calendars. Although smallholder farmers are not responsible for the overarching causes of climate change, they are experiencing the negative impacts first-hand.

Farmers must take steps to adapt to these new conditions and take measures to ensure the negative impacts are not exacerbated locally. To build awareness, MDF PNG is working with its partners in the coffee industry to educate farmers on climate change and sustainable farming practices. This is embedded into the partners' coffee certification program, supported by MDF, which seeks to assist smallholders as they become certified specialty coffee producers.

Norman is from Gepalakah village in Eastern Highlands Province. He was one of the farmers that attended MDF partner PNG Coffee Export's trainings on sustainable farming practices. Norman farms coffee and other garden produce, as many others in his village. The sustainable farming training included information on managing soil erosion, agroforestry and safe weeding methods, all of

which increased Norman's awareness of how his farming practices affect the environment around him and how to mitigate that impact.

Promoting sustainable agriculture practices also plays an important role in actively engaging farmers in preserving and restoring critical habitats for local biodiversity. This in turn enhances the quality of produce.



*When I stopped burning bush and chopping down trees unnecessarily around my coffee garden, I noticed more birds and insects and more flowers on my coffee trees. As a result, I harvest more good coffee beans! I know these trainings are important and very helpful for us now, especially for our future and our children.*

**Norman**

In partnership with Morobe Mountain Coffee Limited, Monpi Coffee and PNG Coffee Export, through the coffee certification program, MDF PNG has trained over 5,000 farmers in Morobe and Eastern Highlands Provinces.

Information on how farmers can practise sustainable farming and protect the environment is a critical part of the training necessary to achieve certification. Coffee which has been certified as 'sustainably sourced' can sell in premium markets – with higher export earnings to businesses and better prices for farmers. MDF is supporting its partners to expand their ability to provide certification to more farmers in PNG. As a result, more farmers can farm responsibly to establish an ecological balance that prevents harm to the environment and brings in essential income to farming households.





*I have noticed changes in the temperature. It is now hotter and more humid during the day than it used to be. I have seen its effects on the environment and my garden, but I did not understand what caused these changes. After attending the training, I am now more careful and farm more responsibly. We ensure rivers near coffee gardens are not polluted and I also educate my family and community on looking after the environment.*

**Nekemeh Norman,**  
Coffee farmer



Click/scan to watch a Papua New Guinean coffee farmer's feedback on sustainable farming training.