

THE NATIONAL TOURISM LEGISLATION REVIEW REPORT



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This report documents findings derived from the Tourism Sector
Legislation Review Regional Consultations (FEBRUARY-MAY 2026)

Executive Summary

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA), in collaboration with the Office of the State Solicitor, conducted a nationwide public consultation process from February to April 2026 to inform the development of a new Papua New Guinea Tourism Authority Act 2026. This report consolidates findings from consultations held across nine (9) provinces and regions, including:

- Port Moresby (National Capital District)
- Alotau (Milne Bay Province)
- Mendi (Southern Highlands Province)
- Mount Hagen (Western Highlands Province)
- Goroka (Eastern Highlands Province)
- Lae (Morobe Province)
- Vanimu (West Sepik/Sandaun Province)
- Kavieng (New Ireland Province)
- Rabaul/Kokopo (East New Britain Province)

Consultations were conducted in two formats over a two-day period: thematic stakeholder workshops (industry-focused breakout sessions) and town hall meetings (open public forums). Online participation via Zoom and Facebook Live was facilitated throughout.



Southern Region Townhall Consultations at the Somare Institute of Leadership and Governance (SILAG), Port Moresby

Background & Context

The Current Legislative Framework

The PNGTPA was established under the Tourism Promotion Authority Act of 1993 – legislation that is now over 30 years old. The current Act:

- Is promotional in nature, focused exclusively on marketing Papua New Guinea as a tourism destination
- Lacks regulatory mandate – TPA has no powers to license, inspect, enforce standards, or penalise non-compliant operators.
- Does not reflect the digital age, experience-based tourism trends, or modern destination management approaches .
- Contains no provisions for licensing, accreditation, inspection, enforcement, or consumer/visitor protection.
- Does not adequately address national-to-provincial coordination mechanisms .



*Ms. Ingrid Kuman, Executive Manager,
Policy & Strategic Planning,
PNG Tourism Promotion Authority*

The Drive For Reform

The proposed reform is grounded in the National Tourism Policy (2025-2045), endorsed by the Nation Executive Council (NEC) in late 2025, which called for law reform and a move to a regulatory framework.

This also includes enhanced TPA functions beyond marketing to include regulations, destination management operational diamentions and the strengthening between national and sub-national coordination.

A gap analysis of the 1993 Act identified critdeficiencies, leading to the development of a zero draft Tourism Authority Bill 2026 – the document under public consultation.

The Proposed New Framework

The Current Legislative Framework

The proposed Papua New Guinea Tourism Authority Act 2026 seeks to transform TPA from a promotional body into a regulatory authority with powers to:

- Register, license, and accredit tourism operators, products, and services
- Inspect tourism establishments and enforce compliance
- Impose penalties for violations
- Establish and maintain a National Tourism Register and databse
- Enter into institutional arrangements with other government agencies



*Mr. Fredrick Tamarua, Deputy State Solicitor,
Office of the State Solicitor*

- Establish standards aligned with international ISO benchmarks
- Support destination management at national and sub-national levels

Consultation Format

Each provincial consultation was structured as follows:

Day 1 – Thematic Stakeholder Workshop:

Participants were divided into four thematic groups:

1. Licensing, Standards and Accreditation
2. Institutional Roles and Governance Arrangements
2. Compliance, Enforcement and Penalties
4. Investment, Innovation and Sustainability

Groups discussed guided questions:

- What works well in tourism today?
- What are the key challenges?
- What should change in the new Tourism Bill?
- How can communities benefit more?
- What are your recommendations?

• Day 2 – Town Hall Public Consultation:

Open Q&A format with presentations on:

- Tourism awareness and supply chain education
- Agritourism opportunities
- Legislative reform overview
- Next steps and feedback process



Highlands Region Consultation Workshop at the Pacific Gardens Hotel, Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province

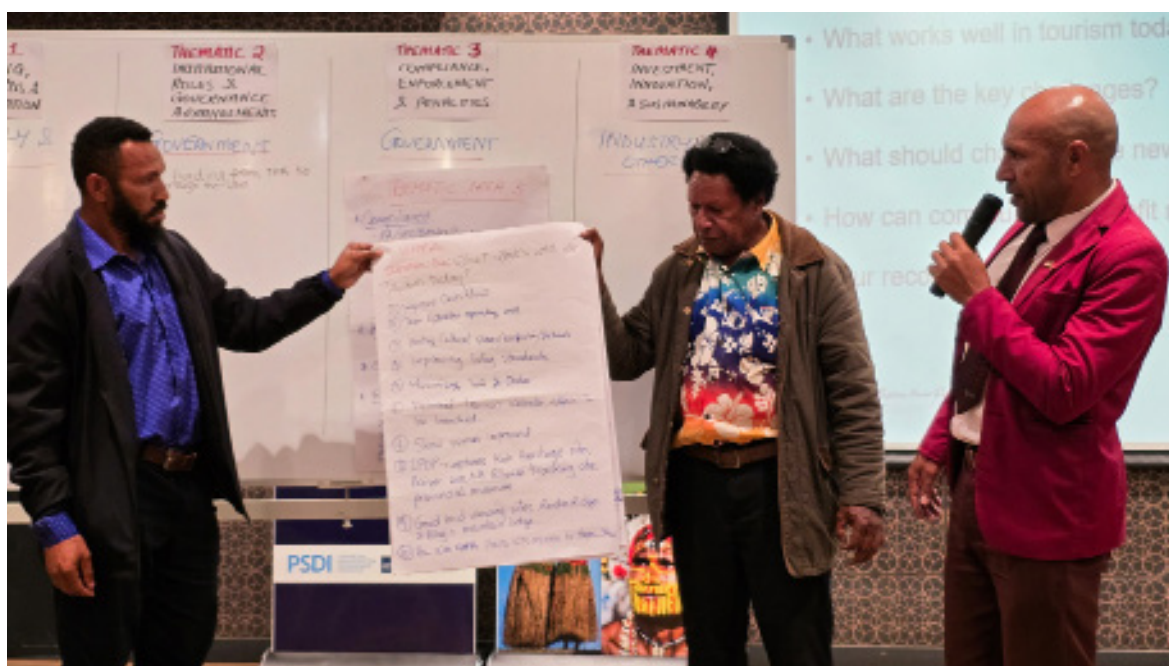
Attendees

Participants included

- Tourism operators (accommodation, transport, tour operators, guides)
- Product and site owners (cultural sites, natural attractions, World War II heritage)
- Provincial and local government representatives
- Industry associations (PNG Tourism Industry Association, chambers of commerce)
- Academic and training institutions (UNITECH, UNRE, TAFE, vocational colleges)
- Government agencies (PNG Ports, NMSA, NCC, IPA, Customs, Immigration, NAC)
- Community leaders, women's groups, youth representatives
- Landowners and resource custodians
- Development partners and NGOs
- Indonesian Consulate (Vanimo)
- Online participants from multiple provinces
- Other interested citizens/individuals and cross sectors



Momase Region Consultation Workshop at the Lae International Hotel, Lae, Morobe Province



Highlands Region Consultation Workshop at the Highlander Hotel, Mt.Hagen, Western Highlands Province

Specific Theme Findings

The workshop used small-group thematic breakouts followed by plenary reporting. Key features of the arrangements:

- Participants were organized into at least four groups, each assigned a theme (Licensing, Standards & Accreditation; Institutional Roles & Governance Arrangements; Compliance, Enforcement & Penalties; Investment, Innovation & Sustainability).
- Each group discussed challenges, reviewed the proposed bill, and produced recommendations. A group spokesperson presented findings to the plenary (multiple speakers per group took turns presenting).

A central facilitator (PNGTPA & Legislative Team) chaired the plenary, invited questions, and ensured presenters' recommendations were noted. Legal/technical representatives (State Solicitor lawyers and TPA officers) responded to points and clarified how draft bill provisions already address some recommendations.

Groups followed similar discussion structure—identify current challenges, propose what should change in the new Bill, and list concrete recommendations on licensing categories, provincial enforcement, SME funding, standards and accreditation, digitalization, infrastructure needs and other notable areas.

After each group report there was Q&A and commentary from participants and officials; many suggestions were confirmed as captured in the draft bill or flagged for follow-up consultations.

Outputs and follow-up: Groups produced action-oriented outputs—recommendations, suggested assignees for follow-up, and requests for one-on-one consultations with agencies.

Participants were asked to submit written feedback and complete surveys to feed into the drafting process.

Key Findings Across All Regions

Licensing, Standards & Accreditation

Findings	Recommendations
- Centralised licensing in Port Moresby creates barriers for provincial operators - Lack of awareness among operators about licensing requirements - Insurance is universally lacking – must be mandatory - Standards must be tiered by category and location - Accreditation should be voluntary but incentivised - Tour guide certification urgently needed - Food safety standards must be enforced - Biosecurity compliance for handicraft export must be addressed - Training providers (TAFE, vocational colleges) must be formally linked to TPA standards	- Decentralise licensing administration to provincial tourism offices - Establish tiered standards framework (urban vs. rural; large vs. micro operators) - Make insurance mandatory – develop affordable insurance products for different operator categories - Create formal partnership between TPA and training institutions for certification - Develop tour guide certification program accessible in all provinces - Address biosecurity compliance for handicraft export through institutional arrangements with Naqia and Customs

Participants discussed the need to move from a Port Moresby-centred system to one that lets provinces register and licence local operators, while also creating clear, tiered standards for safety, food hygiene and guides. They stressed affordable, phased requirements, accredited training and minimum insurance so small and community businesses can comply, and called for enforcement powers paired with support to raise quality across the sector.

Institutional Roles & Governance Arrangements

Findings	Recommendations
• Lack of formal legal connection between TPA and provincial tourism offices • Provincial tourism offices severely under-resourced and under-staffed • Political will at provincial level is the critical determinant of tourism success • MOUs between TPA and provinces exist informally but need legislative backing • Organic Law already grants provinces tourism administration powers – but most provinces unaware or unable to exercise them • National functions not mirrored at provincial level in most provinces • District and LLG level completely absent from tourism governance	1. Legislate formal institutional arrangements between TPA and provincial governments 2. Provide legislative backing for MOUs between national and sub-national levels 3. Decentralise key TPA functions (inspection, accreditation administration, product registration) to provincial level 4. Establish secondment arrangements between TPA and provincial tourism offices 5. Require provinces to establish tourism divisions mirroring national ministry structure 6. Create district-level tourism officer positions 7. Establish national coordination framework for all provincial tourism bodies 8. Revenue sharing mechanism to be legislated

Participants urged clearer decentralisation and formalised arrangements: legislate TPA–provincial MOUs, fund and staff provincial and district tourism offices, and devolve licensing, inspections and service delivery to sub-national levels. They also called for defined roles across national agencies, revenue-sharing or a tourism levy, safeguards for SPVs, and a stronger industry association for coordination.

Compliance, Enforcement & Penalties

Findings	Recommendations
• TPA currently has no enforcement powers – this is the most critical gap • No database of operators makes enforcement impossible • Rogue operators operating freely online (Facebook, social media) defrauding tourists • No differentiation between intentional and unintentional violations • Police not trained or equipped for tourism-related enforcement • Community awareness of compliance requirements is minimal	1. TPA to be given clear enforcement powers with “teeth to bite” 2. Authorised officers to be empowered for inspections and compliance checks 3. Differentiated penalty framework: intentional violations (fines + imprisonment + license revocation); unintentional (fines + compliance notices) 4. TPA to work with IPA to flag non-compliant tourism businesses 5. Collaboration with police for enforcement – tourist police framework 6. Mandatory reporting systems for violations 7. Monitoring and evaluation framework with regular compliance reporting 8. Public awareness campaign on compliance requirements

Participants urged giving the Authority real enforcement powers—authorised officers, inspection rights and a clear penalty system—backed by a national register so non-compliant operators can be regulated. They also called for proportionate sanctions, police coordination for safety issues, and compliance support (training/affordable insurance) to help small operators meet requirements.

Investment, Innovation & Sustainability

Findings	Recommendations
• Access to tourism-specific financing is severely limited • NDB and commercial bank criteria too strict for most tourism SMEs • No dedicated tourism investment fund • Bed tax abolished with GST introduction – provinces lost key revenue source • Agritourism identified as significant untapped opportunity • Sports tourism (rugby league, soccer) identified as emerging opportunity • Medical tourism (Institute of Medical Research, East New Britain) identified as niche opportunity • Digital platforms creating both opportunities and risks • Sustainability must be economic, social, and environmental	1. Establish tourism-specific credit/financing facility accessible to SMEs 2. Reintroduce bed tax or tourism levy at provincial level 3. Develop national agritourism policy in partnership with Department of Agriculture and Livestock 4. Create investment incentives for tourism businesses (tax exemptions, subsidies) 5. Develop niche tourism products (sports tourism, medical tourism, wellness tourism, religious tourism) 6. Establish tourism hubs with concentrated infrastructure investment 7. Regulate digital platforms and online booking systems 8. Mandate sustainability practices in licensing requirements

There were calls for better access to tourism financing and incentives—a dedicated tourism fund, affordable SME credit, and reintroducing a tourism levy/bed tax—to unlock investment in infrastructure, hubs and niche products (agritourism, sports, medical). Participants also supported innovation and digital platforms, sustainability requirements, and targeted incentives to help community and small operators scale up.

Town Hall Sector Specific Findings



The Town Hall consultations were open public discussions held across the provinces. Each session followed short presentations on the proposed Tourism Bill and practical topics (tourism awareness, agritourism and next steps), then moved to open Q&A so community members, operators, land owners, government representatives, and civil society could raise concerns and provide feedback.

1. Consistent Narrative:

Across all consultation sessions, stakeholders consistently identified the same core issues ; outdated legislation, lack of provincial presence, infrastructure deficits, safety perceptions, and the need for standards. This consistency strengthens the evidence base for legislative reform.

2. Industry Readiness:

There was a general consensus that the tourism industry is ready for regulation, provided that the transition is managed progressively (3-5 years) and does not create unnecessary barriers for small operators and community-based tourism ventures.

3. Community Voice

Customary landowners and community leaders were vocal across all sessions about the need for their inclusion in decision-making, fair benefit-sharing, and protection of cultural assets. This must be prominently reflected in the new legislation.

4. Infrastructure

Multiple stakeholders, particularly from New Ireland and Western Highlands, emphasized that tourism standards and regulation cannot be effectively implemented without first addressing basic infrastructure deficits. The legislation should include provisions that link tourism development to infrastructure investment advocacy.

5. Decentralization

The absence of provincial and district-level tourism offices was identified as the single most significant operational gap across all sessions. The new legislation must provide a clear mandate and funding mechanism for provincial tourism offices.

6. Consultation Process Itself Was Valued:

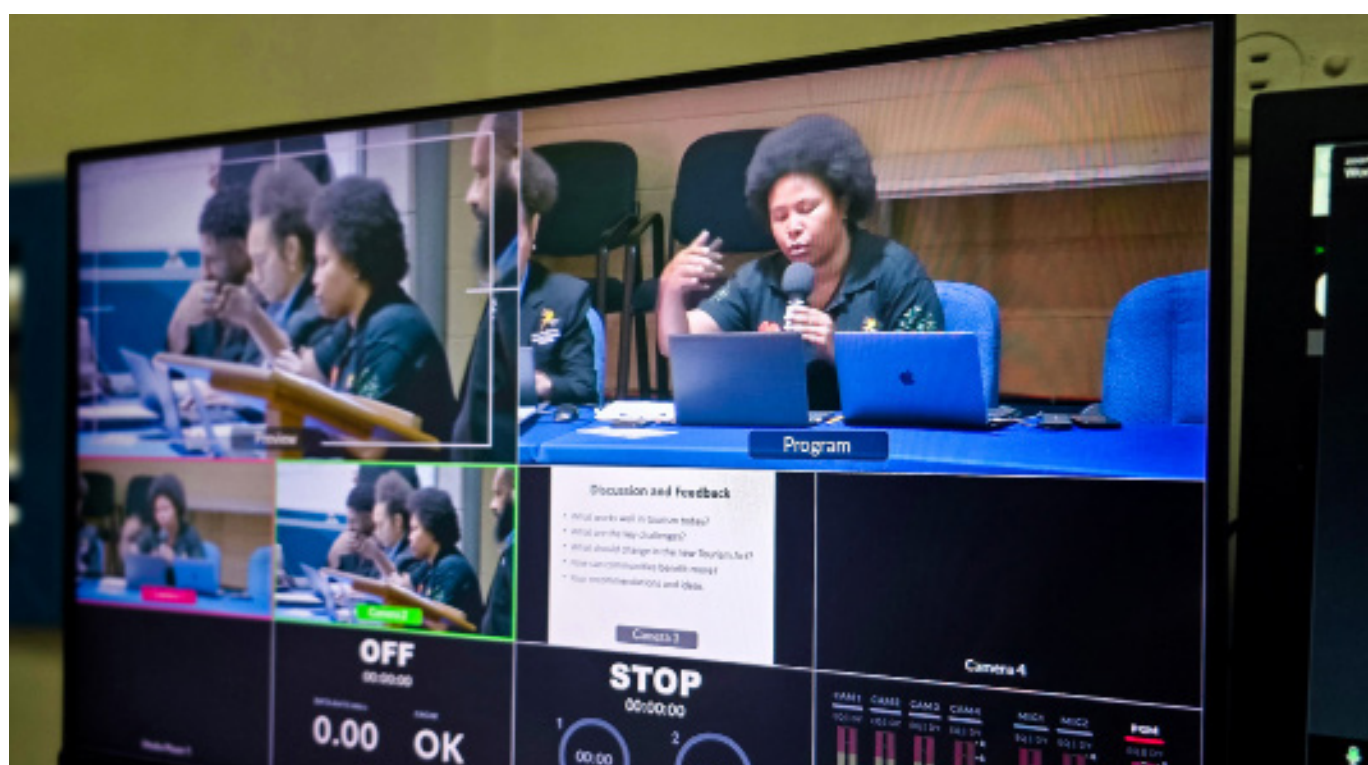
Stakeholders repeatedly expressed appreciation for being consulted for the first time in over 30 years. This goodwill should be maintained through the validation process and ongoing communication about the Bill's progress.

Sector Specific Discussion

Sector	Discussions
Accommodation	Participants raised concerns about the uneven quality of accommodation across the country. There was strong support for a proper classification system so that operators cannot market themselves as high-end facilities if they do not meet the required standards. Pricing was also a hot topic, with many saying that accommodation costs are simply too high and are putting tourists off. In New Ireland specifically, participants talked about how frequent power outages and poor water quality were making it very difficult to run accommodation businesses properly, and that these basic infrastructure failures were damaging the reputation of the province as a destination.
Food & Beverage	A strong message came through across all consultations that local and authentic food needs to be promoted more actively. Participants felt that too many establishments were serving Western or Asian menus and missing the opportunity to showcase local cuisine. One participant described running informal cooking training sessions to help small operators develop local dishes for tourists. There was also a call for proper hygiene and food safety standards to be enforced through the new regulatory framework.

Transport & Infrastructure	Aviation infrastructure was a recurring concern. In New Ireland, participants pointed out that Kavieng Airport could handle larger aircraft but lacked the certification needed to attract direct international flights. In Western Highlands, Mount Hagen Airport was discussed as a potential tourism hub that needed direct international connections. Road conditions were raised in several provinces, with broken bridges and damaged highways making it difficult for tourists to access products in rural areas. Internet connectivity was also a major issue, particularly for island provinces where operators cannot list their properties on international booking platforms because of unreliable networks.
Handicrafts & Cultural Products	There was significant concern about the protection of cultural designs and traditional knowledge. Participants worried that their unique designs could be photographed and replicated in factories overseas without any benefit flowing back to the communities that created them. The legal advice given was that registration through the Office of Intellectual Property is the main protection mechanism, but many participants felt this process was not well understood or accessible. Specific concerns were raised about sacred cultural items being sold without proper community consent or protection.
Tour Operations	Unlicensed and unregulated tour operators were identified as a serious problem. Participants described situations where operators were selling packages online that did not match what was actually delivered, damaging the reputation of destinations. There were strong calls for licensing requirements, penalties for non-compliance, and training programs to bring informal operators up to standard. The lack of professional tour guide training was also raised, with participants arguing that guides need proper knowledge of local culture and history to provide a quality experience.
Tourism Assets & Attractions	Natural assets like waterfalls, mountains, beaches and coral reefs were recognized as major drawcards, but participants felt these were not being managed or marketed effectively. Cultural shows like the Mount Hagen Show and Goroka Show were highlighted as significant assets. There was also discussion about the tension between opening up conservation areas for tourism and ensuring that communities benefit and the environment is protected. Participants called for better coordination between TPA and the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority.
Agritourism	This was an area of genuine enthusiasm across the consultations. Participants discussed the opportunity to bring tourists onto farms, into coffee factories, and into fishing experiences as a way of generating income for rural communities. Betty's Lodge in Simbu was mentioned as a good example of integrating farm activities into the tourist experience. Participants called for better policy alignment between agriculture and tourism agencies, and encouraged operators to partner with tour companies to include farm experiences in travel packages.

Support Services	The absence of tourism information centers at the provincial level was raised consistently. Participants wanted one-stop-shop bureaus where tourists could find out about everything from accommodation to transport to cultural activities. Digital platforms and social media were discussed as both opportunities and risks. While social media can promote a destination effectively, negative posts can spread quickly and cause lasting damage to reputation. Participants debated how much of this could realistically be regulated, with the general conclusion being that the best response is to improve the actual tourist experience rather than trying to control what people say online.
Cruise Ships	Participants from the Islands Region talked about cruise ship tourism as an existing and growing economic activity. However, concerns were raised about the disorganized way in which local vendors and service providers engage with cruise passengers. There was a call for better coordination at ports and terminals, and for local operators to be better prepared to capture the economic opportunity that cruise visits represent.
Cross-Cutting Themes	Several themes came up repeatedly regardless of which sector was being discussed. Safety and security perceptions were identified as the single biggest barrier to tourism growth, with negative media coverage seen as doing lasting damage to the country's reputation. The lack of a national database of tourism operators and products was raised as a fundamental gap that makes it impossible to manage or market the sector effectively. Funding shortages at both national and provincial levels were a constant frustration, and participants called for startup capital support and financial literacy training for small operators. Finally, there were consistent calls for tourism functions to be decentralized so that provincial and district offices have the resources and authority to support operators on the ground rather than everything being managed from Port Moresby.



Southern Region Townhall Consultations at the Somare Institute of Leadership and Governance (SILAG), Port Moresby

What Works Well In Tourism Today



Members of the TSLRC team in front of the Oceania Riviera at berth at the Alotau Port, Alotau, during the Southern Region Consultations in Alotau, Milne Bay Province.

1. Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism was consistently identified as the most significant functioning component of the tourism sector, particularly in:

- Milne Bay/Alotau – identified as a major cruise hub with strong operator networks
- East New Britain – significant cruise arrivals with established shore excursion industry
- Morobe/Lae – growing cruise activity

Key successes noted:

- Post-COVID recovery in cruise arrivals (though numbers have since declined)
- Local operators successfully managing

shore excursions

- Organised vendor markets and merchandise displays at cruise ports
- Community income generation through handicraft sales and cultural performances

Concern raised across all cruise destinations:

The repositioning of Carnival Australia's cruise ships to North America has significantly reduced port calls. TPA confirmed a new Cruise Tourism Strategy is being developed targeting expedition ships while maintaining marketing to larger cruise lines.

2. Local Marketing and Promotion

- Local operators effectively marketing destinations through social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram)
- Community-driven promotion proving more effective than top-down national campaigns in some provinces
- Festivals (Mount Hagen Show, Goroka Show, Morobe Show, Enga Show, Marita Festival) functioning as major tourism drawcards



Mr. Joseph Taugaloidi, chairman of the BOU Resources Development Cooperative Society in Alotau, Milne Bay Province



3. Registration and Compliance (Where Present)

- In provinces with active tourism offices (e.g., Enga, West New Britain), registration compliance among operators is improving
- Transport operators in some provinces registering vehicles prior to cruise ship arrivals
- Improved presentation and organisation at cruise ship landing sites

4. Institutional Examples of Best Practice

Enga Province was cited as a model example:

- 100% provincial government funding for culture and tourism
- Annual Enga Show funded at K500,000 per year
- Tourism bureau operationally funded by provincial government
- Museum rated as one of the finest in the South Pacific
- Governor funds SME tourism custodians through PSIP grants (K5,000–K150,000)
- Online ticketing for shows capturing international visitor data

West New Britain Province:

- Restructured tourism division to mirror national Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture functions
- Division of Tourism, Arts and Culture established under provincial administration
- Aligned budget lines to national functions (TPA, NCC, National Museum and Art Gallery)
- District-level officers established

East New Britain/Rabaul:

- Eastern Tourism Authority established as a structured authority under provincial administration
- CEO with full operational mandate

- Direct reporting to Governor's office
- Strong political will driving tourism investment

Sandaun/West Sepik Province:

- Six-year journey to develop provincial tourism legislation
- Sandaun Destination Authority established under provincial law
- Provincial Tourism Policy developed (2027–2037)
- Revenue generation mechanisms established
- MOU framework with national agencies under development





Milne Bay Province



NGI Region Consultations at the Gazelle International Hotel, Kokopo, East New Britain

Infrastructure & Connectivity

This was the most universally cited challenge across all provinces.

Aviation:

- High domestic airfares (Moresby to Hagen cited at K1,200 one-way – more expensive than Brisbane to Moresby at K800)
- Cancelled or suspended routes (e.g., Kavieng to Kimbe; Vanimo to Jayapura)
- Limited flight frequencies (Mendi: only Monday and Friday flights)
- Airport infrastructure insufficient for larger aircraft (Kavieng airport lacks ISO fire safety certification, preventing direct international flights)

Key Challenges Identified Across Both Consultation Formats

- Lack of tourism information desks at airports

Roads:

- Poor road conditions across all provinces
- Broken bridges (New Ireland – cited post-Cyclone Malia)
- Unsealed roads to tourism sites
- Road safety concerns for tourist transport

Maritime:

- Pilot capacity issues at ports (not fully operational)
- Passenger flow and congestion at port facilities
- Coordination gaps between port authorities and tourism operators
- Inadequate passenger terminals
- Navigation infrastructure deficiencies (highlighted by Coral Adventure grounding incident)

Utilities:

- Unreliable electricity supply (PNG Power outages affecting guest houses, lodges, restaurants)
- Water supply issues (brown/poor quality water in some towns)
- Water supply dependent on PNG Power – when power fails, water fails
- Limited internet/telecommunications



- Roadblocks and tribal conflicts affecting tourist transport routes (particularly in Highlands)
- Site safety issues – inadequate infrastructure at tourism sites (broken bridges, unstable walkways, no handrails)



- coverage in rural and remote areas
- Starlink connectivity issues raised in East New Britain

Safety and Security

- Safety and security was identified as the single greatest barrier to tourism growth nationally.

Key concerns:

- Negative international media portrayal of PNG as dangerous
- Law and order issues in urban centres deterring visitors
- Lack of dedicated tourist police
- Insufficient police presence at tourism sites
- Limited crisis management protocols for tourism operators
- No standardised emergency response framework for tourism incidents

- No mandatory insurance requirements for operators
- Operators running tours without any emergency backup plans
- Enhanced navigational infrastructure
- Vessel monitoring services
- Standardised safe passage corridors
- Pre-entry briefing requirements for cruise masters
- Real-time vessel tracking shared between NMSA and security providers

Site safety incidents cited (East New Britain):

- Multiple tourist injuries at Baining Fire Dance site over many years
- Injuries at hot springs
- No insurance coverage for operators
- Risk of litigation against provincial government

Regulatory and Governance Gaps

National Level:

- TPA has no regulatory powers under the 1993 Act
- No licensing, inspection, or enforcement mechanisms
- No national tourism standards framework
- No mandatory registration system for tourism businesses
- No reliable national database of tourism products and operators
- Fragmented sector with no coordinated governance

Provincial Level:

- Most provincial tourism offices severely under-resourced
- Many operating as committees under Commerce departments rather than standalone authorities
- Lack of political will and budget allocation in most provinces
- No formal connection between TPA and provincial tourism offices
- Absence of MOUs between TPA and provincial governments

- Provincial tourism officers not empowered to enforce any regulations

District and LLG Level:

- No tourism offices or officers at district or LLG level in most provinces
- Communities and product owners unable to access information or support
- No data collection mechanisms at grassroots level

Financial Constraints and Access to Funding

- Zero or minimal financial support from government for operators in most provinces
- TPA budget described as “pittance” – primarily covering wages and administration with nothing for capacity building or industry development
- Difficulty accessing NDB grants and SME financing (strict criteria, documentation requirements)
- No dedicated tourism financing facility
- Bed tax (formerly providing direct revenue to provincial tourism) abolished when GST was introduced in 1999-never replaced.
- No revenue sharing mechanism between national and provincial levels
- High cost of tourism operations (generator fuel, water, food supplies) making pricing uncompetitive

Pricing and Competitiveness

- PNG tourism products significantly overpriced relative to quality offered
- Hotel rooms cited at K350–K450 for rooms equivalent to AUD\$20–30 in Australia
- High domestic airfares making internal tourism prohibitively expensive
- No standardised pricing guidelines across accommodation categories
- Resource owners and operators charging inconsistent rates
- Tour operators not adhering to rates set by provincial tourism offices



- Middlemen capturing disproportionate share of tourism revenue (revenue to provincial tourism) abolished when GST was introduced in 1999 – never replaced
- No revenue sharing mechanism between national and provincial levels
- High cost of tourism operations (generator fuel, water, food supplies) making pricing uncompetitive

Marketing and Promotion Deficiencies

- Insufficient international marketing at scale
- No PNG diplomatic/trade offices abroad with dedicated tourism promotion desks
- Limited digital marketing capacity among provincial operators
- Negative online content and social media portrayal of PNG not being countered
- No centralised information management system
- Lack of tourism information centres in provinces
- Operators marketing individually without coordination

Standards and Quality

- No national tourism standards currently exist
- Inconsistent service quality across all sub-sectors
- No accreditation or certification system
- Food safety and hygiene standards not enforced

- Tour guides operating without training or certification
- Accommodation establishments self-rating without independent verification
- Handicraft products not meeting biosecurity requirements for export/border control
- Cultural performances and products undervalued and underpriced

Community and Landowner Issues

- Land disputes affecting site development and access
- Multiple landowner groups charging different entry fees for the same site
- Communities not adequately benefiting from tourism on their land
- Lack of benefit-sharing frameworks
- Resource owners not aware of their rights or how to formalise tourism arrangements
- Intellectual property and cultural design theft (particularly traditional designs being mass-produced overseas)
- Sacred cultural items removed from provinces and held in museums elsewhere

Capacity and Training

- Severe shortage of trained tourism professionals at all levels
- No standardised tour guide training or certification
- Limited hospitality training outside major urban centres
- Tourism not adequately included in school curriculum
- Last TPA training needs analysis conducted in 2009
- Training providers (TAFE, vocational colleges) not

formally linked to TPA accreditation

- Cultural knowledge and storytelling skills not being captured or transmitted

Data and Information Management

- No comprehensive national database of tourism products, operators, or visitors
- Visitor arrival data not disaggregated to distinguish tourists from other arrivals
- No provincial-level tourism data systems
- Disconnect between national data collection and provincial realities
- No baseline surveys of tourism products in most provinces





Highlands Region Townhall Consultations at the National Institute of Sports (NSI) in Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province.

What Should Change in The New Act

Recommendations Summary

Legislative Recommendations

1. Enact the Papua New Guinea Tourism Authority Act 2026 before end of 2026
2. Rename the authority to reflect regulatory mandate
3. Establish National Tourism Register – mandatory, free/low-cost registration for all tourism businesses
4. Introduce licensing framework – tiered by category, multi-year, with affordable fees
5. Establish voluntary accreditation system aligned to ISO standards
6. Grant enforcement powers to TPA – authorised officers, inspection powers, penalty framework
7. Legislate institutional arrangements between TPA and all relevant agencies
8. Provide for provincial tourism offices in legislation with decentralised functions
9. Legislate revenue sharing between national and provincial levels
10. Protect reserved business activities for local operators
11. Establish intellectual property protections for cultural expressions and traditional knowledge
12. Mandate insurance for all licensed operators (tiered by category)
13. Establish iconic asset protection provisions
14. Include sustainability requirements in licensing conditions
15. Provide for tourist police framework
16. Regulate digital platforms and online booking systems
17. Establish Special Purpose Vehicle safeguards against unfair competition with private sector
18. Gender-neutral language throughout legislation.

Regulatory Recommendations

1. Develop national tourism standards framework with NISIT
2. Develop tiered fee schedule (affordable, not prohibitive)
3. Develop provincial tourism administration guidelines
4. Develop cruise tourism regulations (joint working group with NMSA, PNG Ports)
5. Develop agritourism regulations in partnership with DAL
6. Develop cultural tourism standards with NCC
7. Develop ecotourism standards with CEPA
8. Develop insurance product framework for tourism operators
9. Develop tour guide certification program
10. Develop food safety standards for tourism food and beverage sector



Southern Region Consultation Workshop at the Wanigili Centre, Education, Alotau, Milne Bay

Operational Recommendations (TPA Actions)

1. Complete national consultation process and publish consultation report
2. Refine zero draft bill based on consultation feedback
3. Conduct validation sessions with key stakeholders
4. Submit refined bill through legislative process (FLC, NEC, Parliament)
5. Conduct training needs analysis for tourism sector
6. Establish tourism information centres in key provinces
7. Develop and launch cruise tourism strategy
8. Develop agritourism policy in partnership with DAL
9. Establish national tourism database
10. Develop provincial MOU framework
11. Conduct product development audits in key provinces
12. Strengthen TIA membership and capacity
13. Develop digital marketing support for provincial operators
14. Establish institutional arrangements with key agencies (NMSA, NCC, IPA, CEPA, etc.)



NGI Region Consultations at the Gazelle International Hotel, Kokopo, East New Britain

Next Steps

1.  **Documentation**-All consultation feedback recorded, filmed, and documented
2.  **Feedback & Consultation Report**-Consolidated report from all provincial consultations
3.  **Bill Refinement**--Zero draft bill revised based on consultation feedback
4.  **Validation Process** – Refined bill returned to stakeholders for validation
5.  **State Solicitors Office Clearance**-The Bill including Drafting Instructions submitted to OSS for Certificate of Necessity (CON)
6.  **First Legislative Council Approval**– Refined bill submitted to FLC for Certificate of Compliance (COC)
7.  **NEC/Cabinet Approval**-National Executive Council Deliberation and approval
8.  **Parliament**-Tabled for Bill enactment

Target: Bill to Parliament before end of 2026

Ongoing feedback during and after consultation sessions

- Online survey available via QR codes and TPA website
- Email submissions
- Written submissions accepted at all consultation venues
- Live sessions for online participation
- Consultation report to be shared with all provincial governments

Conclusion

The nationwide consultation process has demonstrated overwhelming support for the reform of PNG's tourism legislation. After more than 30 years operating under a promotional framework, there is clear consensus across all regions, sectors, and levels of government that:

2. Regulation is necessary and overdue – the industry is ready for it
2. Decentralisation is essential – functions, resources, and powers must flow to provinces
3. Standards will improve competitiveness – but must be introduced gradually with adequate transition support
4. Community inclusion is non-negotiable – tourism must deliver tangible benefits to landowners and communities
5. Political will is the catalyst – without provincial leadership commitment, legislation alone will not drive change
6. Whole-of-government coordination is required – tourism cannot succeed in isolation from infrastructure, security, utilities, and other sectors
7. The human factor is paramount – training, capacity building, and cultural preservation must accompany regulatory reform

The diversity of voices captured across this consultation – from cruise operators in Milne Bay to agritourism pioneers in the Highlands, from maritime safety experts in Rabaul to community leaders in Vanimo – reflects the breadth and complexity of PNG's tourism sector.

The new legislation must be flexible enough to accommodate this diversity while establishing the minimum standards and governance frameworks that will enable the sector to realise its extraordinary potential.

As one participant in Alotau noted, citing Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it is done."

END OF REPORT

Thank You



● policy@papuanewguinea.travel ●

Report compiled from consultation transcripts: February–May 2026 (Policy & Strategic Planning Division)

Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority in collaboration with the Office of the State Solicitor