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Outline

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1. Introduction

- Developing a culture for empirical research – Tertiary institutions and research institutes in all the sectors
- GoPNG to be pro-active and to fund institutions to conduct research
- Empirical Research to inform public policy
- NRI's goal is to make a contribution to influencing and informing public policy through empirical research.

2. Establishment of Research Program

- The National Research Institute (NRI), as PNG's premier policy research institution, is situated to take a central role in the review of decentralization as part of the process of restructuring provincial government in PNG. In February, 2007 NRI established the Research Program on National/Sub-National Governance.
- In December 2007 the NEC established a task force on government and administration whose work includes the development of proposals for the restructure of decentralized government.

Establishment of Program...

- Support from NRI to the reform process includes the creation and maintenance of a database on bibliographical references and provincial government performance that is available to all interested researchers, and the research and writing of reports and papers dealing with the issues of decentralization.

Establishment of Research Program...

- The agenda of the research program is driven by the policy process, with research activity directed towards the major issues under consideration.
- NRI has made a major contribution in support of research on decentralization through the completion of a literature review accompanied by an extensive annotated bibliography on the reform of decentralized government in PNG from 1975 to 2007. This review and bibliography was available to the government in October 2007 and formally presented as a publication accompanied by the contents on CD-ROM in February 2008.

Establishment of Research Program...

- NRI produced additional research papers on the central issues of decentralization, designed to assist in the evaluation of policy initiatives underlying proposals for reform. These publications included papers that provided a broader in-depth analysis of specific research proposals, as well as papers that outlined the detailed elements of individual reforms.
- These papers served as a foundation for the extensive research projects that underpin the process of evaluating the various policy options that were put forth for the restructure of decentralized government.

3. Issues for Research

- **Research Papers:**
- *A Coherent Policy Process for the Restructure of Decentralized Government in PNG*
- *A Research Framework for The Evaluation of Policy Options Related to the Restructure of Decentralized Government*
- *Decentralization Reform and East New Britain's Quest for Autonomy*
- *Learning from the Past: The Historical Bases of the Policy Process for the Restructure of Decentralized Government*
- *Financial Reforms as a Platform for the Restructure of Decentralized Government in PNG*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of Greater Autonomy for East New Britain Provincial Government*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of a Proposal to Create Provinces of Hela and Jiwaka*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of the District Authorities Act*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of the PSRAG Proposals*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of the Status of NCD*
- *A Research Framework for the Evaluation of the Devolution Exercise*

4. Progress of Research Program

1. *Literature Review On the Reform of Intergovernmental Relations in PNG: The Quest for Good Governance*
 - Launched in 2008
 - Very informative document starting with a background to the establishment of decentralisation in PNG
 - Followed with the review and reform of intergovernmental arrangements – from 1976 to 2007
 - Finally, issues and options for the future – fiscal arrangements/autonomy/abolition or proliferation of prov govt/corruption and reform/improvement in the delivery of services
 - Followed with a detailed annotated bibliography comprise of official documents and unofficial documents – useful source of reference for researchers in GoPNG depts/agencies

Progress...

2. *Spotlight – Need for a Coherent policy process (2008)*
 - In 2007/2008, various reform initiatives were made public. They included: new provinces, abolition of prov govts, autonomy, RIGFA.
 - There was a likelihood of conflict and contradiction of these initiatives – originating from different sources.
 - The Spotlight was published to highlight this contradiction and the need to consider these initiatives through a single policy process

Progress...

3. *Special Publication – Options for the Restructure of Decentralised Government in PNG (2008)*
 - Publication came after a series of public seminar presentations on the following topics:
 1. Lessons from the past: the historical basis of the policy process for the restructure of decentralised govt
 2. ENB quest for autonomy
 3. Financial Reforms as a platform for the restructure of decentralised govt
 4. Research framework for the evaluation of policy options related to the restructure of decentralised govt
 - This publication contains some important information to the issue of reform to decentralisation in PNG

Progress...

- The history of reform to prov govt in PNG can be divided into two phases – *the technical approach and the political approach*
- The reports containing the recommendations for making improvements within the present system of prov govt fall within the category of the first approach
- The second report encompasses reports that were based on considerations which were overtly political, and mainly addressed the competition between the national politicians and provincial politicians for control over the distribution of resources and delivery of services to the people.

Progress...

- The technical recommendations, no matter how central to the process of improving governance in PNG, did not address what national politicians saw as the greatest problem relating to prov govt – the very existence of provincial politicians.
- Simply put, the proposals required political support to be adopted, but they did not address the political concerns of those whose support was required.

Progress...

4. *Spotlight – LLG and District Profiling in the Southern Region*
 - This activity was undertaken to show what is in the districts and LLGs as a result of the GoPNG focus on districts – 7LLGs and 6 districts in the Southern Region were profiled
 - The Spotlight was launched to provide the stakeholders the status of the districts and LLGs
 - Similar work has been undertaken by other stakeholders in the field of decentralisation

5. Stakeholder Consultation

- The research program has established a close working relationship with stakeholders involved in the decentralised system – GoPNG – DPLGA, Capacity Building Division, PLLSMA and LLG Division, NEFC, Treasury and Finance, National Planning and Monitoring, ORD, SNS and Provincial Administrations, District Administrations and LLG Administrations.
- All the work published by NRI are distributed to the stakeholders and many are also invited to the launchings of the publications and seminars.

Stakeholder...

- This relationship has enabled the research program to participate in programs organised by the various stakeholders
- But most importantly, the relationship has enabled the program to influence some agendas of the GoPNG
- Examples:
 1. Recommendation to identify only 1 agency to process any reform initiatives to decentralisation has resulted in DPLGA been given the mandate to evaluate any reform initiative
 2. Recommendation to carefully evaluate the different initiatives – abolition or proliferation of prov govts, new provinces, autonomy, two tier vs three tier system
 3. Involvement of NRI in the NSP and the Task Force
 4. Policy process for the creation of new provinces and autonomy
 5. Most of the current initiatives been driven by technical teams – NSP, Autonomy, SPIA, PCab, PPII, Strengthening of PLLSMA, most important is the **RIGFA based on Cost of Service Delivery by NEFC** etc – Important lesson from the past reforms

Stakeholder...

- One important lesson to learn is for technical teams/professionals to design reform programs – NSP a classical example and GoPNG has publicly acknowledge this effort
- Politicians must remain neutral and let experts put programs for development together – provide leadership only, NEFC studies/proposals is a good example

6. Conclusion

- Research is important for the govt because it provides in-depth knowledge of the status of an issue.
- Research can also provide a better understanding of an issue – this can be used as a yardstick to formulate policies that can effectively deal with the issue
- There are institutions in the country that can provide that research/information support but needs adequate funding from the govt
- For the first time reform agendas are driven by technical teams made up of professional public servants – GoPNG should encourage this practice