

Primary Contractor's overview of Phase 1 of the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment

Merilyn Gairo
Senior Social Consultant
July 2025

Presentation outline

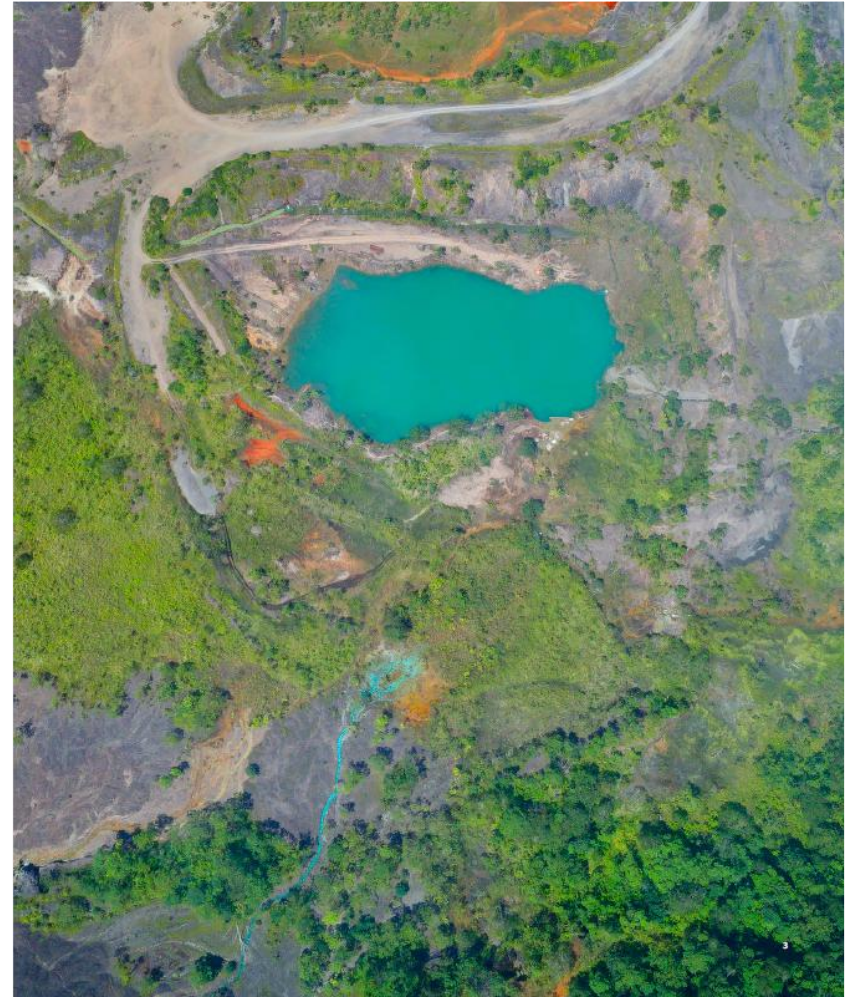


- Background
- PMLIA governance structure
- Phase 1 overview video
- Human rights-based approach
- Maximising local content
- Phase 1 Assessment Report

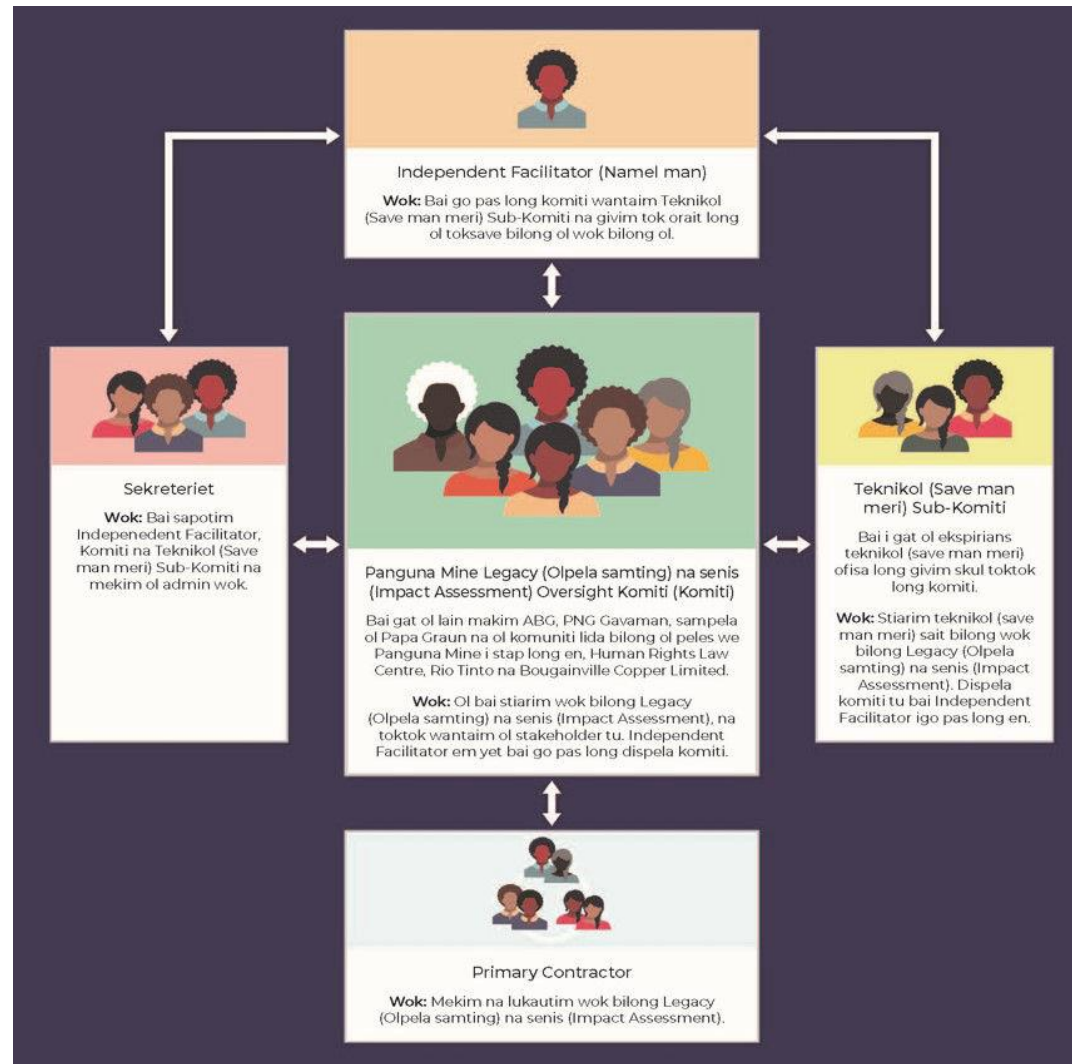


Background

- Once one of the **world's largest open-pit mines**, operating from **1972 to 1989**.
- Major contributor to **PNG's export revenue** for 17 years.
- Operations abruptly **ceased in 1989** due to the **outbreak of civil war**, amid growing concerns over environmental damage and human rights impacts, especially from **riverine tailings disposal**.
- In **September 2020**, **156 residents (now 170)**, supported by the **Human Rights Law Centre**, filed a complaint with the Australian Government.
- This led to a commitment from Rio Tinto to **re-engage with communities** and **fund an independent assessment** of environmental, social, and human rights impacts since 1989.



PMLIA governance structure



Human rights-based approach



- The PMLIA process was conducted with a **rights-respecting, participatory approach** with the affected communities.
- Impacted communities were recognised as rightsholders, not just stakeholders.
- Adopted key principles of
 - Participation
 - Non-discrimination and equality
 - Transparency and accountability
- Culturally sensitive and respectful
- Results of work communicated directly back to community in Tok Pisin



Maximising local content



- Local communities actively participated in fieldwork and surveys.
- Focus on maximising local content throughout process to:
 - Build capacity of services and suppliers
 - Optimise expenditure within Bougainville
 - Build capacity of Bougainvillean environmental and social scientists.
 - Build integrity of process.
- Tetra Tech Coffey Arawa office established and staffed by Bougainvilleans embedded local ownership



Phase 1 Assessment Report

- The integrated environmental, social and human rights impact assessment confirmed that the legacy of the mine continues to pose risks to health, safety, and livelihoods
- Recommendations for actual and potential human rights impacts to be remedied and areas for further investigation were included in the report.
- Phase 1 Assessment Report is available at <http://tanorama.com/pangunasecretariat.html>

