Dr Nancy R Irwin

Consultant | Smallholder value chains, inclusive finance, climate and community development | Papua New Guinea and the Pacific

Honorary Doctorate (University of York, 2026) | PhD | BSc (Hons) First Class

nancy@nancyrirwin.com | +44 7424 715589 | Glossop, Derbyshire, UK | linkedin.com/in/nancy-r-irwin

PROFILE

Consultant with more than 25 years' work in Papua New Guinea, fluent in Tok Pisin. I make farm-to-market supply chains work on the ground, including where there is no phone signal, and I find the gaps where programmes on paper do not reach the farm. As co-founder and Managing Director of Kamapim (2018 to 2025) I built a smallholder export business from nothing, trained 21,000 farmers and led programmes funded by DFAT, USAID and the European Union. I co-designed PNG's first agricultural credit-scoring product, co-authored UNCTAD's vanilla sustainability guidebook for Papua New Guinea for UNCTAD, and hold a PhD with 14 peer-reviewed papers. I contract through my UK company, Amaterra Ltd, for short-term missions and home-based assignments. I have been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of York for my contributions to sustainability.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Smallholder value chains and market systems: farm registration, training, traceability, quality, organic certification, direct buying, processing and export from remote PNG to buyers in France; national standards and export guides.
- Inclusive and digital finance: co-designed Rural Loan (DFAT-funded GSMA call, with MiBank and Field Buzz): 355 loans to 330 farmers, 35% women; bank accounts for people who cannot read, using a photograph and a secret word; tools built for basic phones and poor signal.
- Climate, forests and conservation: about 9,600 hectares of rainforest protected through conservation deeds, under the USAID and DFAT Market Development Facility programmes; APEC keynote on green climate finance (2026).
- Programme design, management, research and learning: Five Pillars framework for the USAID Lukautim Graun programme; ran several donor-funded projects at once, each with its own budget and reporting; PhD research methods, 52 research grants, evidence used to adapt programmes.
- Gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and safeguarding: protection for women on remote fieldwork, complaint lines and harassment training; changed a training model so it reached women; as a disabled founder, I build accessibility in as standard.
- Community engagement and locally led development: a conference of 272 chiefs in Madang (2019) with Westpac and three government agencies; conservation deeds agreed with clan leaders; consultation with 17 national government bodies and 2 provincial governments; work with provincial and district governments.
- Operations, risk and business continuity: set up every function of a PNG company (legal, HR, staff handbook, offices, housing, systems); kept it running through COVID-19 with one of few permits to cross provincial borders; staff safety and security systems; advised the Chair of PNG's national COVID-19 emergency committee.
- Country experience: Papua New Guinea (more than 25 years, including remote Madang and Oro provinces), Australia, United Kingdom, Belgium, Czech Republic.
- Donors and clients: DFAT (including the Market Development Facility and GSMA AgriTech funding), USAID, European Union (via CIFOR), UNCTAD, provincial and district governments in PNG, private investors. Contracting entity: Amaterra Ltd (UK, VAT registered), with professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

EXPERIENCE

Co-founder and Managing Director, Kamapim Ltd (PNG vanilla and cocoa exporter) *2018 to 2025*

- Built the company from nothing with smallholder farmers in remote PNG: farmer registration, training, digital traceability, quality, direct buying, processing, organic certification and export. Trained 21,000 farmers. Led 42 staff at peak season.

- USAID Lukautim Graun, Middle Ramu, Madang: designed the Five Pillars framework (conservation, sanitation, bank accounts for all, no child labour, organic production); 1,254 farmers registered in 2023 and trained in local languages.
- Rural Loan: with MiBank and Field Buzz, through a competitive GSMA call funded by DFAT, co-designed PNG's first credit-scoring product built on agricultural data. 355 loans to 330 farmers over 2.5 years; 35% women.
- General Manager of the PNG partner in the EU-funded programme Forestry, Climate Change and Biodiversity Nexus in Managalas, Oro Province, via CIFOR, working with clan leaders, Oro Provincial Government and communities.
- COVID-19: held one of a small number of permits to cross provincial barriers and kept supplies and farm incomes moving.
- Safeguarding: protection for women on remote fieldwork, open complaint lines and staff training on harassment.
- Featured in the Market Development Facility (Australian Aid) learning paper Sourcing from the Last Mile (2023). Agriculture Development Organisation of the Year, CorporateLiveWire Global Awards, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Founder and Director, Amaterra Ltd (UK consultancy) *2017 to present*

- UNCTAD consultancy: co-authored A Voluntary Sustainability Standards Guidebook for Vanilla in Papua New Guinea (2024) and the Papua New Guinea Vanilla Export Guide (2023), consulting 17 national government bodies and 2 provincial governments.
- Advised a Belgian green investment company (2018 to 2019) on a vanilla value chain with PNG landowners: business model, land use, gender equality, training and suppliers. This became Kamapim.
- Advised a Belgian life sciences company, as an independent contractor (2023 to 2025), on its PNG operations and supply chain.
- Worked closely with senior officials of PNG's Department of Agriculture and Livestock, and with the Minister, on a confidential matter.
- APEC, Guangzhou, February 2026: represented PNG's Investment Promotion Authority, speaking on green climate finance and metrics to measure the green economy.

Founder and Chief Executive, NuraTerra Inc (PNG non-profit) *2025 to present*

- Conservation, climate and livelihoods with remote PNG communities.

Founder and Director, Discover Glossopdale CIC (UK) *2026 to present*

- Community platform listing 1,406 local organisations, with accessibility information on every listing. Also founded Sustainable High Peak, a network that helps local groups find each other.

Earlier career: science and research *1995 to 2016*

- PhD fieldwork in remote PNG; described a new bat species, *Nyctimene wrightae*. Fourteen peer-reviewed papers.
- Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (1996 to 1998): set up national bat monitoring with Flemish and Walloon volunteer groups and two regional ministries; materials in three languages.
- Daphne Jackson Trust Fellow, University of York, from 2009, after a brain injury in 2002; managed research grants and line-managed a research technician.

OTHER

Author of *Is It Fatal?*, a book on clear thinking under pressure

Languages: English (native), Tok Pisin (fluent), spoken French. British national.

Finalist, Sustainable Business Award, Enterprise Vision Awards 2026 (UK's business award for women).