

Principle 1: Recognition that low input production strategies are pursued by the vast majority of smallholder coffee growers.

In PNG, as in many other countries, agricultural extension strategies have been premised on the assumption that smallholder farmers were in a transition from low-input farming practices (low levels of technology and few or no external inputs) to high input, capital-intensive farming methods using high levels of external inputs, reminiscent of plantation style production. Consequently, most extension training material available worldwide, including in PNG, is based on high-input production methods, more in keeping with capital intensive plantation production, using high levels of technology or mechanisation, formal credit and relying on a paid workforce.

Attempts to shift farmers to high input farming have been largely unsuccessful in many countries, including PNG, because a whole range of socio-cultural factors make such transitions difficult for the communities involved. Because traditional low input farming methods are so socially and culturally embedded, it means that a great deal of extension training based on high input farming has had little impact. This is because conventional extension strategies are unable to accommodate the low input production strategies practised by the vast majority of smallholders across all export and domestic crops for sale or home consumption.

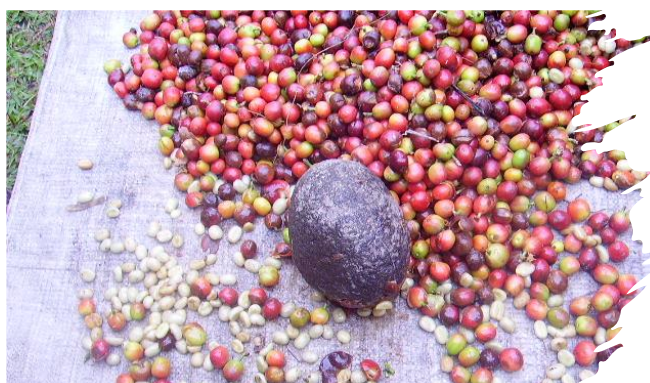
The low input system is characterised by:

- low-cost production with inputs of fertiliser, pesticides, and herbicides considerably below plantation rates of inputs
- the use of simple processing techniques
- little or no use of formal sector credit
- a heavy reliance on family labour with minimal use of hired labour

Thus, there is a need for extension training materials for CIC, private sector organisations and non-government organisations (NGO), to be more closely aligned with the low input production strategy. The training package acknowledges and accepts that low input production is the dominant production strategy of coffee smallholders, and therefore extension efforts must accommodate this reality.



Using a hand pulper to pulp coffee cherry.



Some smallholders cannot afford a hand pulper so must pulp their cherry using a stone.