

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Papua New Guinea

Introduction

There is a shortage of pro bono support in the Pacific Islands, including Papua New Guinea. Aside from a few local NGOs that support their respective local communities, firm-based pro bono help is limited.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel. 	<p>The provision of legal services is regulated by the Lawyers Act 1986.¹ A lawyer must be admitted to practise law and hold a practising certificate. Requirements for admission include (a) possession of a law degree from the University of Papua New Guinea or universities in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; and (b) completing Practical Legal Training at the Papua New Guinea Legal Training Institute (“PNGTLI”), which involves passing all courses at the PNGTLI over the course of approximately 9 to 11 months.² Practising certificates come in two forms: restricted certificates for junior lawyers with five years’ or less experience; and unrestricted</p>

¹ Sections 28 and 33 of the Lawyers Act 1986, available at http://www.paclii.org/pg/legis/consol_act/la1986117/ (last visited on December 27, 2024). See also Pauline Mogish, “Rights of and Procedures of Admission in South Pacific Countries” available at <https://www.usp.ac.fj/discipline-of-law/wp-content/uploads/sites/128/2022/01/Rights-and-Procedures-of-Admission-in-South-Pacific-Countries-Pauline-Mogish-and-David-Lambu.pdf> (last visited on December 27, 2024).

² Section 25 of the Lawyers Act 1986.

	<p>certificates for lawyers who have five or more years' experience and want to practice as private lawyers on their own account.</p> <p>Foreign lawyers must be admitted in a similar manner to local lawyers (as summarised in the paragraph above) as there is no separate licence allowing foreign lawyers to offer advisory services in foreign and international law, save that foreign lawyers (a) may write to the PNG Law Society to seek exemption from certain courses at the PNGLTI; and (b) must also pass exams in PNG Constitutional Law, PNG Land Law, and PNG Customary Law administered by the PNG Law Society. Foreign lawyers may provide services in some other form of commercial association with local lawyers.³</p> <p>In-house counsel must have passed the bar (Bar Admission) and signed the Lawyers Roll to practice law.⁴</p>
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>There are no specific laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Papua New Guinea do not require a specific license to provide pro bono legal services but they must hold a valid practicing certificate to offer any legal services, whether paid or unpaid.</p>
<p>4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Foreign lawyers do not require any additional licenses to provide pro bono legal services, but foreign lawyers must be admitted to practice law in PNG and hold a valid practicing certificate to offer any legal services, whether paid or unpaid.</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If</p>	<p>Lawyers in Papua New Guinea are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.</p>

³ APEC Legal Services Initiative, "APEC economy: Papua New Guinea; Jurisdiction: Papua New Guinea", available at https://www.legalservices.apec.org/inventory/papua_new_guinea.html (last visited on December 27, 2024).

⁴ The requirements relating to lawyers under the Lawyers Act 1986 applies to in-house counsel as well. Specifically, Section 34A, which was added by the Lawyers (Amendment) Act 2021 (No. 39 of 2021), states: "For avoidance of doubt, reference to a lawyer shall include in-house lawyer, legal consultant to a body corporate and any title in the list provided under Schedule 1."

so, how many?	
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	Aspiring lawyers in Papua New Guinea are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers.
7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?	There are no aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	Lawyers in Papua New Guinea do not receive any “Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.
Insurance and advertising	
<p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>Unrestricted Practising Certificate as well as Restricted Practising Certificate holders are required to have professional indemnity insurance cover for a minimum of K500,000⁵ before engaging in legal practice, including the provision of pro bono services. This applies to all lawyers including in-house counsels who undertake any form of legal work including pro bono services.</p> <p>Section 35 of the Lawyers Act 1986 (amended 2021) requires all lawyers to possess a practising certificate, and obtaining insurance coverage is a prerequisite for the issuance of a practising certificate (both restricted and unrestricted) by the PNG Law Society.</p> <p>If a lawyer undertakes pro bono work as part of their role within the firm or organisation they are employed by, the insurance cover associated with their practising certificate automatically extends to cover these pro bono legal services.</p> <p>However, if a lawyer is volunteering outside of their employment, they must obtain approval from their employer. This is because the insurance cover for their practising certificate is paid for by their employer, and any liability arising</p>

⁵ *Supra*, note 3. See also section 43 of the Lawyers Act 1986.

	<p>from the provision of pro bono legal services will have to be met by their employer under whose insurance the lawyer is covered.</p> <p>Unrestricted Practising Certificate holders who run a stand alone legal practice (firm) without any partners can take on pro bono legal services and the insurance paid for their Unrestricted Practising Certificate will cover the pro bono services they provide.</p> <p>If there is a pro bono secondment arrangement for a lawyer to be seconded to a pro bono service provider, it is essential to have aligning insurance coverage to ensure that the lawyer's services are covered by the host organisation and/or the employer. The scope of the pro bono legal services are also important to consider when assessing the insurance coverage required. For example, providing legal advice and representation in litigation cases carry a greater risk of liability and is a key factor in determining the appropriate insurance coverage.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no specific rules that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients. Section 5 of the Professional Conduct Rules 1989⁶ sets out general rules relating to advertisements by lawyers, for instance, the advertisement must not claim or imply superiority of the lawyer over any or all other lawyers, or claim or imply that the lawyer is a specialist, expert or leader.</p>
Pro bono practice and culture	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>The main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) cases of gender inequality, and particularly high rates of violence against women;⁷ (b) police brutality and human rights violations by state actors; (c) land ownership disputes and fraudulent acquisition of land, especially in rural parts of PNG; and <p>modern slavery practices, <i>i.e.</i> employees paid</p>

⁶ See https://www.lawgratis.com/blog-detail/professional-ethics-at-papua-new-guinea?utm_ (Last viewed on 26 January 2026).

⁷ *Supra*, note 3.

	well below the minimum wage (PGK3.50) especially in smaller foreign owned and operated shops.
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	<p>(a) International firms with offices in Port Moresby.</p> <p>(b) Hope Pro Bono: Two PNG lawyers are in the process of establishing a legal organisation to provide free legal representation for victims and survivors of gender based violence and sorcery accusations relation violence.⁸</p> <p>(c) HELP Resources: HELP Resources is a local NGO that supports women who earn their livelihood from the informal economy.⁹</p> <p>(d) Voice for Change Inc¹⁰: Voice for Change Inc. is a community-based organization in Papua New Guinea that focuses on providing legal aid and support services, particularly for women and children who are victims of gender-based violence (GBV). They assist in navigating the legal system, ensuring that victims receive the necessary legal support to pursue justice.</p> <p>(e) Femili PNG Inc: Femili PNG Inc is a Papua New Guinean NGO that works to improve responses to family and sexual violence. The organization offers pro bono legal services to survivors of Family Sexual Violence. This includes legal advice, assistance with obtaining protection orders, and representation in court. Their legal team works to ensure that survivors can navigate the legal system effectively and receive the justice they deserve</p> <p><i>Note: Femili PNG Inc does not provide legal representation but focuses on case management to ensure access to justice.</i></p> <p>(f) The Voice Inc¹¹: The Voice Inc. is a youth-led not-for-profit organization guiding young people in leadership and personal development. In December 2023, The Voice</p>

⁸ See <https://www.qlsproctor.com.au/2024/06/png-lawyers-gain-clc-insights/> (last visited on December 27, 2024).

⁹ See <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2020/03/sponsoredcontent-women-empowering-women-how-australian-volunteers-are-supporting-gender-equality-in-papua-new-guinea/> (last visited on December 27, 2024) and <https://www.pngbuai.com/300socialsciences/self-help/englishhelp.pdf> (last visited on December 27, 2024).

¹⁰ See <https://voiceforchange.ngo/> (last visited 11 February 2025).

¹¹ See <https://www.thevoicepng.org/> (last visited 11 February 2025)

	<p>Inc and the Catholic Diocese launched a Sorcery Accusations Related Violence (SARV) Legal Help Desk in Kundiawa Simbu Province¹².</p> <p>There are many small community-based organisations across the country that advocate against gender-based violence and promote peace and security in communities where they do offer some support services where they assist victims of gender-based violence to obtain protection orders from the Courts. Many of these organisations are not legally registered and do not have any online presence.</p>
<p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p>	<p>There are no noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters.</p>
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>There are no pro bono clearing houses or pro bono clinics set up in PNG to provide pro bono matters or resources, but there are global pro bono clearinghouses and legal services providers such as TrustLaw or PILnet.¹³</p>
<p>15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>None based in Papua New Guinea.</p> <p>The annual Asia Pro Bono Conference & Access to Justice Exchange brings together pro bono practitioners, law firms, NGOs and legal educators.¹⁴</p> <p>The Asia Pro Bono Consortium is an active network of organisations that includes NGOs, international pro bono intermediaries, and clearing houses working across the Asia-Pacific. Recent activity includes <i>Asia Pro Bono Roundtables</i> and events aimed at regional collaboration.¹⁵</p>

¹² See <https://www.thenational.com.pg/the-voice-and-diocese-set-up-kundiawa-legal-help-desk/>

¹³ See <https://www.trust.org/trustlaw/> and <https://www.pilnet.org/> (last visited on 14 October 2025).

¹⁴ https://www.probonoconference.org/conference-history/?utm_source (Last viewed on 24 January 2026).

¹⁵ https://www.globalprobonohub.com/export/sites/pro-bono/resource/downloads/Pro-Bono-Professional-Networks.pdf?utm_ (Last viewed on 24 January 2026).

	PILnet (Asia) actively works across multiple countries in the Asia-Pacific region, connecting civil society organisations with volunteer pro bono lawyers, and building legal capacity for NGOs and social enterprises. ¹⁶
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	There are no awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work in PNG.

Acknowledgements

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Name and Email Address of Individual at Local Counsel: Emma Minimbi, Chris Redden, Tureia Sample and Sarah Morton-Ramwell

Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.

¹⁶ https://www.pilnet.org/asia/?utm_ (Last viewed on 24 January 2026).