Enhancing Value Added Wood Processing in Papua New Guinea

Welcome Note

Welcome to the first issue of the ACIAR Project FST/2012/092, "Enhancing Value Added Wood Processing in Papua New Guinea" Newsletter. This newsletter will be produced on a quarterly basis.

As this is the first issue, the newsletter will give an insight of the project's overall aim, objectives and how key planned activities will contribute significantly to value added wood processing in Papua New Guinea.

Project Background

**ACIAR Project FST/2012/092**

In efforts to utilize PNG’s forest resources to generate additional opportunities for economic growth, employment and increased value added processing of harvested logs, the PNG Government has formulated the National Strategies for Downstream Processing of Forest Products in PNG (2014 draft). This was done to encourage value added domestic wood processing while phasing out log export over time. The PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030 has set a target to increase the level of domestic processing of log harvest from 20% to 80% by 2030.

However there are many research and structural challenges, constraints and opportunities (at Government, industry, community, and landowner levels) which need to be addressed to support the development of competitive value-added wood industries. The project recognises the urgent need to provide research and technology development to develop and implement commercially sustainable log supply chains, knowledge and capacity in wood science and processing technologies, as well as the processing structures which support successful domestic value-adding wood processing enterprises.

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"The PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030 has set a target to increase the level of domestic processing of log harvest from 20% to 80% by 2030."
Project Aim & Objectives

Overall aim of the Project is to increase the contribution that utilisation of forest resources makes to national and local economies, including landowners and processors, through the development of domestic value added wood processing methods. The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To enhance the knowledge of wood properties and processing characteristics of PNG timbers.
2. To identify, pilot and evaluate interventions for enhanced value-added processing systems.
3. To estimate the potential contribution and distribution of economic impacts to national and local economies from enhanced value added wood processing.
4. To enhance the capacity of Government, institutional support bodies, industry partners and landowners to implement value added wood processing policies, strategies and practices.

Key Activities, planned impacts & adaptation pathways

The project was designed to deliver some impacts for each of the key activities of the project. The underlying technical research conducted under Objective 1 will be used by the partners in implementation of the pilot value-adding interventions under Objective 2, where it is anticipated that direct involvement of private sector partners will lead to adoption of the various technologies. The capacity building activities under Objective 3 will assist the partners to implement the research activities and to support adoption of enhanced value-added processing beyond the life of the project. The outputs arising from activities under Objective 4 are designed to support and influence the policy framework for value-added wood processing in PNG.
The project is led by the University of Melbourne, with the PNG Forest Authority having the role of the country coordinator. In PNG, research expertise in PNG University of Technology, PNG Forest Research Institute and Timber and Forest Training Centre will be utilised to cover various aspects of wood processing, such as sawing, preservative treatment, solar drying and gluing issues. Combining the expertise of the University of Melbourne and PNG partners provides an advantage in addressing all aspects of the timber processing, furniture manufacturing and product development.

**PNG Collaborating Institutions include:**
- PNG Forest Authority
- PNG Forest Research Institute
- PNG University of Technology
- Timber & Forestry Training College
- PNG Forest Industry Association
- University of Melbourne—Australia

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**Project Management Team**

**ACIAR Research Program Manager (Forestry)**

Tony Bartlett

**Project Leader**

Associate Professor Barbara Ozarska, the leader of Forest Products Research Group, School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, University of Melbourne, is the Project Manager. She has an extensive experience in processing and manufacturing of high value wood products and has previously managed three ACIAR projects on wood value-adding in Indonesia, Laos and PNG and is currently managing project in Laos and this project in PNG.

**Country Project Coordinator**

Dr Ruth Turia, PNGFA, she is also the Director of Forest Policy and Planning, is the Country Coordinator. She will play a major role in coordinating project activities, in particular in linking research and implementation activities and the economic assessment of value added processes with the government policy on downstream wood processing.

**Project Coordinator: Port Moresby**

Andrew Aopo, PNGFA, Principal Management Officer, responsible for coordination with existing timber industries. He will be coordinating the project in Port Moresby and activities related to the development of value added processes and wood products for various markets.

**Project Coordinator: Lae**

Benjamin Vali, PNGFRI, Wood Technologist, research and training expertise in wood preservation, monitoring and evaluation of treatment plants and sawmills, kiln-drying schedules, timber grading, as well as creating, designing and developing databases. He will lead the development of database for PNG timbers also the coordination of project in Lae.
Project Objectives & Team Leaders

**Objective 1:** To enhance the knowledge of wood properties and processing characteristics of PNG timbers.

**Team Leader:** Mr. Benjamin Vali, PNG Forest Research Institute, Forest Products Program

**Objective 2:** To identify, pilot and evaluate interventions for enhanced value-added processing systems.

**Team Leader:** Dr Mex Peki, PNG University of Technology, Forestry Department, has extensive research and teaching expertise in wood technology and wood products.

**Objective 3:** To estimate the potential contribution and distribution of economic impacts to national and local economies from enhanced value added wood processing.

**Team Leader:** Dr Bob Smith, has specialist expertise in economic, social and environmental impacts assessment.

**Objective 4:** To enhance the capacity of Government, institutional support bodies, industry partners and landowners to implement value added wood processing policies, strategies and practices.

**Team Leader:** Mr. Dambis Kaip, PNGFA, Forest Policy and Planning Directorate

Initial ACIAR Meeting in FRI—Lae, before the Project Inception Meeting in Port Moresby. Associate Prof. Barbara Ozarska chairing the meeting.
Research Capacity & Facilities

The Project has identified the urgent need to upgrade research facilities at FRI and Unitech to ensure that high quality research and teaching in wood science and value-added wood processing could be undertaken.

One of the most recent and important contribution to the research capacity and facilities from the project is the purchase a new Instron Wood testing machine, now installed at PNGFRI, Forest Products Program. New equipment is vital in reducing maintenance costs and allow greater self-funding.

From the previous ACIAR Project significant achievements include the upgrading of research, training and educational facilities at PNG Unitech, TFTC and PNG FRI. This includes: purchasing of important equipment and laboratory instruments for the three PNG organisations according to their priorities (e.g. solar kiln installed at PNG Unitech, laboratory kiln at PNG FRI, wood bending equipment at TFTC).

Group photo of project partners (FRI, Unitech & TFTC) in preliminary meeting at FRI—Lae. Professor Simon Saulei, Director of FRI, front, far left.

The installation and training of the Instron Wood Testing Machine by Mr. Stephen So, Instron Engineer with participants from FRI, Unitech—Forestry Dept. & TFTC, Lae.

Intended workshop outcomes:

- Project partners and stakeholders will participate in reviewing and refining the “Impact Pathway” for the ‘Enhancing Value Added Wood Processing in PNG’ project; defining expected longer term, intermediate, immediate outcomes, activities, inputs and foundational (getting ready) activities and identifying assumptions. This will result in a common understanding by stake-holders of the project in its entirety.

- Project partners and stakeholders will build on the agreed impact pathway and contribute to development of important elements of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for this new project i.e.
  - Identify Monitoring and Evaluation users,
  - Develop a set of monitoring and evaluation questions (incl. key evaluation questions) that meets the needs of the partners and stakeholders,
  - Define indicators (or measures) that will answer the questions,
  - Describe feasible methods for collecting the data to inform the indicators,
  - Specify frequency of data collection,
  - Assign responsibility for data collection

A user focused Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) Plan is an important Project Management Tool that will support project accountability, continuous improvement and ultimately, demonstration of project impact and success.

DISCLAIMER

ACIAR Project FST/2012/092 newsletter is a collaborative publication between PNG Forest Authority and ACIAR. Other collaborating institutions are University (Forestry Dept.) TUFT, PalEER, PNGFA and University of Melbourne. Any views expressed are the views of the author and not the views of the collaborating institutions. Any newspaper or journal interested in articles published in this should contact the Coordination Project Coordinator or Director Forest Policy and Planning for fair and accurate reporting to avoid misinterpretation.

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