

Coconut and other non-traditional forest resources for the manufacture of Engineered Wood Products



Key details

Location

Fiji

Duration

Start Feb 2021

End Jan 2026

Budget

AUD 2,862,872

Commissioned organisation

Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Partners

Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

Project Leader

Dr Rob McGavin

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Nora Devoe

Program

Forestry

Project code

FST/2019/128

Overview

This project aims to deliver and validate wood processing technologies to transform coconut and other currently low-value forest resources into high-value engineered wood products suitable for local and international markets.

By providing new, profitable outlets for low-value log products, we can increase the returns from these materials to farmers, timber growers and processors, contribute to the renewal of the coconut estate, and expand employment and trade.

This project will build upon FST/2009/062, which enabled rotary peeling, and through experimentation, will identify suitable veneer grade sorting, drying, gluing, pressing and finishing methods for coconut-based engineered wood products. Which production processes/combinations will result in products that profitably meet market demands is currently unknown, but the research team and industry partners have the required experience and knowledge to enable the complete manufacturing process to be developed.

Project outcomes

- Determining the availability, accessibility and community readiness to supply non-traditional forest resources including senile coconut palms and other small-diameter forest resources (e.g., thinnings).



- Establishing efficient conversion and profitable product manufacturing protocols aligned with market expectations.
 - Identifying product and market opportunities that will provide economic and social benefit throughout the value chain and for the wider community, linking farmers to manufacturers and manufacturers to markets in efficient and equitable value chains.
 - Examining the potential for and promoting gender-balanced participation in the Fiji forest products industry in the context of increasing the skilled labour pool to direct and staff new EWP manufacture.
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Summary of outcomes to date

2021–22

The Future EWP Project (FST/2019/128) has officially commenced and has established a strong project team between ACIAR, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Pacific Community (SPC), Fiji Ministry of Forests, University of Queensland (UQ), Griffith University (GU), PHAMAPlus, Fiji National University (FNU) along with Fijian and Australian industry champions. The implementation of the project plan is well underway which started with the recruitment of two dedicated project staff hosted by SPC. The project team has been further strengthened by four post-graduate candidates (two from FNU, one from UQ and one from GU). The project team have now started engaging with industry and other key stakeholders to establish collaboration and development opportunities.



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