



Forestry

Enhancing value-added wood processing in Papua New Guinea

Overview

More than 60 per cent of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) total land mass is forested and owned by customary landowners. The PNG Government wants to encourage domestic processing of 80 per cent of timber harvested from its forests.

The sector contributes to foreign exchange, employment and national and regional economies. Closed forest covers 29 million ha, of which 10 million ha have been allocated under timber permits for commercial development. The country's forestry sector has moved from a small domestic processing industry in the 1950s to a large log export-oriented industry under the 1979 National Forest Policy, which emphasised the maximum use of forest resources for economic development.

The PNG Government now wants to utilize its forest resources to generate additional opportunities for economic growth, employment and increased value-added processing of harvested logs.

Research and structural challenges, constraints and opportunities need to be addressed to support the development of competitive value-added wood industries. Currently, most local wood processing focuses on primary conversion of logs to low grade building materials. Technical knowledge and capacity about efficient processing of different native timber species is very low. Therefore, research and technologies are needed to develop and implement enhanced value-added wood processing throughout PNG.



KEY FACTS

ACIAR Project No. FST/2012/092

Duration: August 2014 to July 2018 (4 years)

Target areas: Papua New Guinea

Budget: AU\$1,106,222

Project leader

Assoc Prof Barbara Ozarska
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Key partners

- PNG Forest Authority
- PNG Forest Research Institute
- PNG University of Technology
- Timber and Forestry Training College
- PNG Forest Industries Association

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Nora Devoe



Research/Objective

The project aims 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 are to:

- Enhance the knowledge of wood properties and processing characteristics of PNG timbers.
- Identify, pilot and evaluate interventions for enhanced value-added processing systems.
- Estimate the potential contribution and distribution of economic impacts to national and local economies from enhanced value-added wood processing.
- Enhance capacity of government, institutional support bodies, industry partners and landowners to implement value-added wood processing policies, strategies and practices.

Expected scientific results

- Contributions to wood technology science through valuable data on the properties and processing characteristics of PNG's lesser-known species from secondary and plantation forests.
- Evidence on how research can assist a national government to transform its forest industry sector in a way that increases economic benefits to various stakeholders in the value chain.
- Results of the studies to allow researchers to develop joint publications - both as detailed ACIAR technical reports and refereed publications in high quality scientific journals and conference proceedings.
- A database on PNG timbers to be published online and research findings to be made widely available to the research community and industry.

Expected outcomes

- Economic benefits associated with employment in the market economy, maximising the returns from processed forest products to PNG and communities through market-related value-adding, improved recovery, product development and availability of affordable high-quality products for local people.
- Environmental benefits associated with the promotion of the sustainable use and local processing of both natural and plantation forest resources.
- Social benefits, combined with economic benefits, associated with increased employment opportunities, increased capacity to participate in financial structures and equitable participation by landowners, facilitating infrastructure development in rural and urban areas specified under timber permit and timber authority authorities.

