

Assessment of forest industry training needs

Fiji

Final Report

PPD 13/98 Rev. 2 (I)

The pre-project was designed to contribute to the development of a sustainable forest industry sector as the development of the forestry sector has been constrained by the inefficient and ineffective forest industries in Fiji. The specific objectives of this pre-project were: (i) to obtain a clear overview of the training gaps and needs and the opportunities for the forest industry sector in Fiji and to recommend training strategies to satisfy these needs; and (ii) to formulate a full project proposal on the implementation of the recommended training strategies.

The pre-project activities included a field survey, conducted in April and May 2003, on the training needs and gaps of the forest industry sector. Its main outcomes include the following:

- **Logging Industry:** The annual logging is approximately 415,000 m³ (natural forests 110,000m³ and pine plantations 300,000m³). About 600 workers are directly involved with the logging operations (natural forests 42%; pine plantations 50% whilst 8% in mahogany plantations). Of these, 75% are certified workers with further training required to improve their skills.
- **Milling:** An estimated 1400 workers are directly involved with the sawmill operations including two mills processing plywood and veneer production. Only 40% are considered skilled workers.
- **Timber Seasoning and Preservation:** Approximately 45,000m³ timber undergo kiln drying annually. With 500 workers for these operations, only 10% and 5% are considered skilled in the seasoning and preservation respectively.
- **Furniture Making and Value Adding:** Over 100 predominantly small companies are involved one way or another in these activities. An estimated 5000 workers are involved with a skilled workforce well below 30% and with a very high manpower turnover.
- **Training Facilities and Resources:** The Forestry Department has three training facilities including a newly established (yet to be completed) Timber Industry Training Center. The former two training facilities have been used for forest resources and management training for forestry staff, including training in forest logging for the logging industry. The low quality

and non availability of necessary plants and equipment have been identified. Shortages of qualified staff and appropriate training curricula have been observed in these institutions.

The pre-project also formulated a full project proposal to address the low level of skills, motivation and the capacity for skills development, the project's specific objectives are to: (i) develop a dynamic curricula for training programmes with the provisions of necessary plants and equipment for the training center; and (ii) train a cadre of highly skilled and motivated operators, supervisors and trainers for the primary and secondary wood-processing sub-sector. The project is aimed at promoting the active participation of indigenous Fijian landowner units in the forest sector which is a prerequisite to sustaining the primary and secondary wood processing sub-sectors. This proposal will be reviewed at the 27th Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposal in February 2004.

The implementation of this pre-project has experienced a long delay. The delay was mainly caused by the limited performance of the Executing Agency in obtaining the pre-project funds from the Ministry of Finance who had hold the funds since they were disbursed by ITTO. The total amount of the pre-project funds, which was transferred from ITTO to EA in 1999, was placed under the Ministry of Finance. The pre project funds lapsed at the end of the financial year 1999. There were no budgetary provisions in the proceeding years 2000, 2001 and even in the middle of 2002. The Ministry of Finance released the funds to the Trust Funds of EA in the month of July 2002. Further delays were experienced later when EA selected a pre-project coordinator and international consultants.

As the ITTO Secretariat has received the pre-project completion report and project proposal, the pre project can be reported as completed subject to receipt of an audited financial report.