



GRANTEE PROFILE

NEW BAMBOO TREATMENT FACILITY INCREASES HOME FURNISHINGS PRODUCERS ABILITY TO MEET LOCAL AND EXPORT DEMAND



“The key successfully marketing Indonesian bamboo lies in innovation, quality treatment and sustainable production. This plant brings us closer to achieving that ideal.”

— Pak Tengku Lukmanul Hakim,
CV Sahabat Bambu

At first glance, it is hard to imagine why Indonesia’s bamboo industry would not automatically thrive: the country boasts more than 60 indigenous and introduced bamboo species suitable for a range of uses. Global demand for bamboo is growing thanks to its well-deserved reputation as a sustainable resource; it is the fastest growing woody plant in the world.

However, Indonesia lags behind countries such as China and Vietnam in the production of quality bamboo products at affordable prices. Those countries have been faster to implement technologies to address the disadvantages inherent to use of bamboo in the construction of home furnishings and other products: untreated, bamboo dries out and cracks quickly, and most significantly it is prone to infestation by the Powderpost Beetle, which infests not only living bamboo stalks but also bamboo products. Without proper treatment, the life of most bamboo products is rarely more than three years. However, most large-scale curing and fumigation efforts are not only environmentally unsound, but impractical given the small and rural nature of bamboo farming done in Indonesia.

The solution to this problem lies with a technology called Vertical Soak Diffusion (VSD), which uses borates of low toxicity to cure bamboo and prevent infestation. Although this is a highly effective treatment, in its most basic form it is time-consuming, with three weeks required for the treatment and drying of each batch of bamboo poles.

To upgrade their approach to VSD, the Indonesian non-governmental organization MAPI, which works with small bamboo producers, applied for and was awarded a grant of approximately \$25,000 to establish a pressure treatment facility, train staff to operate it and teach farmers the necessary bamboo clump management and harvesting practices. ►►



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



With the new technology, the treatment capacity has increased ten-fold, allowing local farmers to better meet both local demand and export requirements.

(continued from other side)

The grant was entitled “Efficient and Effective Bamboo Preservation for Increased Application and Value in the Export Sector of Java’s Home Furnishing Industry,” and its activities took place from February through August 2008.

The new facility was established in Yogyakarta and is now being operated by the private firm CV Sahabat Bambu, an associate company of MAPI. The treatment plant consists of a large tank and supporting equipment such as a vacuum machine, pressure machine, and fluid tank.

With the new technology, the treatment capacity has increased ten-fold. Now bamboo can be treated in a few hours and dried in one to two days. The plant’s capacity has expanded from 2,000 medium to large poles/month to 6,000, and an additional 10,000 small diameter poles/month can also be processed. This allows local farmers to better meet both local demand (which is primarily for the larger poles) and export requirements (70 percent of the bamboo bought by exporters is the smaller size).

MAPI is the Indonesian affiliate of the Mangrove Action Project, which is based in Trang, Thailand and the State of Washington in the United States. MAPI operates community-based coastal resource management programs in Riau, North Sumatera, Aceh, North and South Sulawesi and Central Java. CV Sahabat Bambu, a registered independent business, was formed as an outgrowth of MAPI’s work to explore the viability of bamboo as a sustainable building resource.

The Business Innovation Fund (BIF) is an initiative launched in June, 2007 by SENADA. BIF offers short-term, high impact grants for the development of innovative products for the value chains where SENADA focuses. Details can be found at www.senada.or.id/innovation.

SENADA is a four-year, USAID-financed project whose goal is to increase Indonesia's economic growth and employment by improving the competitiveness of major, labor-intensive light manufacturing industries. 🌸

To learn more about SENADA,
visit <http://www.senada.or.id>.