

INTERVENTION HIGHLIGHT

Fiji's growing green kava innovation

Lami Kava expands business model for new value added products

Maintaining kava quality is essential for sustained market access. This is one of the biggest challenges faced by processors and exporters like Lami Kava Ltd that are dependent on accessing raw materials from a large number of small growers working across wide ranging conditions and a large geographic area. PHAMA Plus co-invested in the Lami Kava's advanced kava wash bay and grading facility that enabled the company to adopt an alternative business model that involved buying green kava from growers.

At a glance

- Lami Kava is one of the first companies in Fiji to pioneer green kava processing on a commercial scale.
- The alternative business model allows farmers to harvest green kava and sell it directly to Lami Kava either at a selling point or at their factory in Suva.
- The wash bay allowed for a transition from a manual washing process using power washers to a more automatic workflow, allowing greater control over the quality of its raw material supply chain.
- Lami Kava aims to meet the growing demand for green kava beverage, a natural and sustainable product that has the potential to offer a more calming effect than dried kava powder.

Expanding to a "beyond the powder" market

Building on its previous partnership, PHAMA Plus partnered with Lami Kava in 30 October 2023 to replicate the traditional process of preparing green kava powder and diversify its product range to dehydrated instant kava beverages and tablets. This intervention aligns with PHAMA Plus kava sector strategy of targeting onshore value creation, supporting supply-side innovation and sharing the benefits with local kava farmers to maintain premium pricing for their produce.

Lami Kava's growing green kava business model has generated greater demand for green kava which means the company is buying more kava direct from farmers. The company has added an additional 52 kava farming households from Nakorotobu, Navosa and Naitasiri districts to its supply chain. Farmers are also pleased with the quick field-to-pocket turnaround in income generation where post-harvesting processing activities (like drying, cleaning, peeling, etc.) are no longer required.



With the wash bay, our factory throughput has increased and normal volumes that initially took up to three days for washing are now completed in under three hours. This is a positive flow-on effect for our farmers in terms of time saved on post-harvest related work which translates into reduced farm costs. They can now focus more on planting and managing their kava plantations and less on drying kava - while we manage and control the quality issues associated with the washing, drying and storage of kava.

- Lami Kava Managing Director,
Donny Yee