

Wood substitutes: KFCPL to adopt CSIR-NIIST Technology

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Making an earnest effort to promote wood substitutes from natural fibre composites, Kerala Furniture Consortium Pvt Ltd is all set to enter into a tie-up with the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology , Thiruvananthapuram, one of the constituent laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research(CSIR).

An MoU will be signed in this regard on Wednesday between the consortium, based at Kurichilakkode, Kodanaad, Perumbavoor, and CSIR-NIIST. NIIST is a pioneer in the research of natural fibre composites for more than two decades. The identified natural fibre composites are thermo-set mouldable.

Kerala Furniture Consortium Pvt Ltd. (KFCPL) is one of the seven clusters in the country benchmarked by the National Innovation Council, under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda. It is a Common Facility Centre (CFC) to pursue seasoning, designing, standardisation, testing and finishing rubber wood for manufacturing furniture.

KFCPL is an innovation cluster of national importance, dedicated to developing patented alternative substitutes for dwindling rainforest hardwood, as part of safeguarding environment. The cluster is aimed at boosting innovation and competitiveness in the MSME sector in the state by upgrading the quality of furniture and related industries.

A natural fibre polymer composite christened 'polycoir' developed by CSIR-NIIST had been found to be very suitable as a substitute for wood-based products. The process for making polycoir utilises coir fibre as well as other natural fibres like banana, jute, sisal etc.

According to Dr Suresh Das, Director, CSIR-NIIST, there is great potential for tapping many unutilised or underutilised lingo-cellulosic fibres for making composite material, which possesses several unique properties like fire resistance, termite resistance and water resistance.

As per the MoU, further technical development required for commercialisation of fibre composites will be undertaken jointly between CSIR-NIIST and KFCPL.

K P Raveendran, Managing Director of KFCPL, said that they would bring out a

range of knockdown furniture series by the end of this year.

