

Media release - 23 June 2020



Unlocking the potential of the South Sulawesi seaweed industry

The seaweed industry is big in South Sulawesi, but its potential is much bigger.

An interdisciplinary team of researchers from Indonesia and Australia are setting out to help the province unlock this potential, to drive prosperity and development.

Despite Indonesia being the largest producer of carrageenan seaweed in the world, and South Sulawesi the largest in the country, the industry remains under-utilised and under-developed.

In this new project under the AIC's Partnership for Australia-Indonesia Research (PAIR) researchers will seek to understand the current state of the seaweed industry in South Sulawesi, to inform later projects that will focus on upgrading it.

All research will be undertaken remotely, with no travel required.

Background

Agriculture plays a central role in South Sulawesi's economy, and seaweed is a key component of this, supporting the livelihoods of up to 40,000 small-scale farmers and large numbers of traders and exporters. Indonesia and South Sulawesi hold an international competitive advantage in seaweed production, which is used in the food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries.

Yet, stakeholders in the seaweed industry believe [there are opportunities](#) to add value and improve current practices. For example, around 90 per cent of Indonesian seaweed is exported as a raw material, whereas processing before exporting could increase its value.

Meanwhile, modernising cultivation methods, upgrading harvesting technology and improving institutional arrangements could increase the livelihoods of farmers. Improvements to technology and policies could also reduce the environmental impact of the industry.

In this project, researchers will seek to understand the current state of the seaweed industry in South Sulawesi by conducting analyses on:

- The drivers and trends in the seaweed industry, nationally and within the province
- The value chain of the South Sulawesi seaweed industry
- The livelihoods of seaweed cultivating communities in South Sulawesi.

Contact details and more information on next page

The research team

PAIR domain: Commodities

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This is the third of four PAIR Pilot Projects. Previously we announced projects from the domains '[Young people skills and development](#)' and '[Young people, health and wellbeing](#)'.

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About PAIR

PAIR is the flagship program for the AIC's new research model, supported by the Australian Government, the Indonesian Government, the South Sulawesi Provincial Government and the AIC's eleven university partners.

Focused on South Sulawesi, PAIR explores the western coastal region of the province where a new 145-kilometre railway line is being built, connecting two major cities and three regencies: Makassar, Maros, Pangkajene, Barru and Parepare. It will explore four key areas: seaweed as a major commodity; transport, logistics and supply chain; young people health and wellbeing; and young people skills and development.



Visit the [PAIR website](#) for more information.

More information on next page

About The Australia -Indonesia Centre

Through its In Conversation webinars, the Australia-Indonesia Centre has dissected the impacts of COVID-19 from perspectives including public health, economics, governance, international trade and international education. PAIR research will add to these efforts as we continue to seek ways to work together towards recovery and continued development.

The AIC is a consortium of 11 leading research universities in both countries. Its mission is to advance people-to-people links in science, technology, education, innovation and culture.



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Photo: Agung Pananrang in Bone, South Sulawesi.