

## IMPREGNASI KAYU KELAPA SAWIT MENGGUNAKAN RESIN *Pinus merkusii* DAN ASAM AKRILAT

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### ABSTRAK

Kayu kelapa sawit yang tersedia secara terus-menerus dalam skala besar belum dimanfaatkan secara ekonomis sehubungan dengan kualitasnya yang rendah, tidak homogen, dan mudah rusak oleh pengaruh cuaca dan serangan serangga. Dalam hal lain, resin yang dihasilkan dari pohon *Pinus merkusii* merupakan hasil samping industri kehutanan, dan telah dimanfaatkan dalam pengolahan kayu untuk bangunan. Sehubungan dengan tingginya permintaan bahan kayu di Indonesia, kayu kelapa sawit dapat digunakan sebagai salah satu sumber alternatif pengolahan kayu untuk bangunan. Dalam penelitian ini, kayu kelapa sawit diolah menggunakan teknik impregnasi dengan resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dalam berbagai pelarut dan konsentrasi untuk meningkatkan kualitas dan ketahanannya terhadap pengaruh cuaca dan serangga. Asam akrilat (AA) juga ditambahkan untuk meningkatkan interaksi antara matriks resin pengimpregnasi dengan permukaan serat kayu selama proses pemasakan dengan adanya peroksida sebagai inisiator. Karakteristik dari kayu kelapa sawit setelah impregnasi dibandingkan dengan kayu bangunan standar.

Kata kunci : kayu kelapa sawit, impregnasi, resin *Pinus merkusii*, kayu bangunan

### PENDAHULUAN

Dalam dekade ini, perkebunan kelapa sawit di Indonesia telah berkembang dengan pesat yang pada tahun 1995 - 2005 luas arealnya diprediksi akan meningkat dari 2,7 sampai 4,5 juta ha. Bila 10% dari areal perkebunan tersebut harus diremajaikan, maka akan dihasilkan 11,7 juta pohon kelapa sawit, yang setara dengan 5,85 juta ton kayu setiap tahunnya (9). Oleh karena itu, kayu kelapa sawit (KKS) dapat digunakan sebagai salah satu sumber alternatif untuk kayu bangunan, karena permintaan akan bahan kayu di Indonesia setiap tahun mencapai 80 juta m<sup>3</sup>, sedangkan pasokan yang tersedia hanya 49 juta m<sup>3</sup>. Akan tetapi, KKS tersebut belum dimanfaatkan secara ekonomis, yang terutama disebabkan oleh kualitas dan homogenitasnya yang rendah, serta mudah terdekomposisi oleh pengaruh cuaca dan serangan serangga.

Dalam hal lain, pohon *Pinus merkusii* telah ditanam secara luas untuk program penghijauan lahan kritis, dan merupakan salah satu bahan baku terbaik untuk pembuatan pulp kertas. Hasil samping dari program penghijauan ini adalah resin yang diperoleh dengan menyadap kulit batang pinus tersebut yang dapat digunakan untuk pembuatan terpentin dan pengolahan kayu lunak agar lebih tahan terhadap pengaruh cuaca dan serangan serangga.

Pencampuran bahan kayu dan turunan selulosa dengan matriks polimer telah dilakukan untuk penyediaan komposit sebagai bahan teknik, (1,5). Selanjutnya, Shiraishi (11) telah mengeksplorasi teknik plastifikasi menggunakan metode impregnasi dengan plastisizer dan modifikasi struktur dari molekul selulosa dalam bahan kayu. Sehubungan dengan meningkatnya spesifikasi bahan kayu, dewasa ini teknik impregnasi dengan matriks polimer lebih

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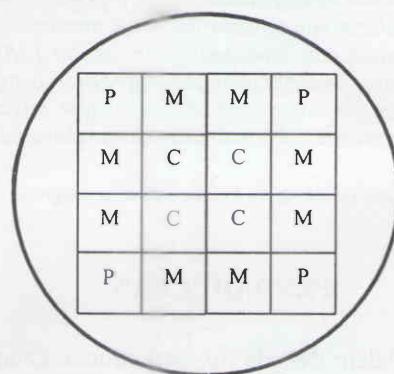
mendapatkan perhatian untuk memperbaiki kualitas kayu komoditas. Li *et al.* (6) telah menggunakan reaksi esterifikasi untuk meningkatkan kestabilan dimensi dan sifat tahan nyala dari bahan kayu. Minato *et al.* (7), menggunakan teknik impregnasi untuk memodifikasi sifat fisika dan kimia dari bahan kayu, dengan menggunakan senyawa fenol alam. Schut (10) melaporkan bahwa kayu terimpregnasi dengan bahan termoplastik telah berhasil dikembangkan dan dikomersialkan. Cooperative Research Centre for Polymer Blends (2) di Australia juga telah memanfaatkan limbah plastik dan kertas daur ulang untuk memproduksi bahan pengganti kayu. Beberapa peneliti telah menggunakan serbuk limbah kelapa sawit dari: tandan kosong, pelepas dan batang, sebagai bahan pengisi untuk matriks polimer (14,15). Ismail dan Hasliza (3) serta Ismail dan Jaffri (4) telah menggunakan serbuk limbah kelapa sawit sebagai penguat untuk karet alam. Wirjosentono (12, 13) menggunakan serbuk tandan kosong sawit sebagai pengisi untuk poliolefins, yang menghasilkan campuran plastik dengan sifat mekanis cukup baik, tetapi dapat terdegradasi dalam alam setelah tidak digunakan lagi oleh pengaruh mikroorganisme dan radiasi ultraviolet dalam cahaya matahari.

## BAHAN DAN METODE

### Penyediaan spesimen kayu kelapa sawit

Pohon kelapa sawit dipilih dari jenis dura yang telah berumur 25 tahun dan tingginya 15 m dari kebun Aek Pancur, Pusat Penelitian Kelapa Sawit, Medan. Pohon sawit ditebang dan sampel batang diambil sepanjang 1 m dari bagian tengah (pada ketinggian 7 m dari tanah). Sampel batang dibersihkan kulitnya membentuk

balok dengan diameter  $20 \times 20 \text{ cm}^2$  dan dirajang sejajar batang menjadi balok-balok kecil dengan diameter  $5 \times 5 \text{ cm}^2$ , yang kemudian dikeringkan di bawah sinar matahari. Sampel KKS dipisahkan menjadi tiga bagian: Periperal (P), Tengah (M), dan Inti (C), dengan cara seperti terlihat pada Gambar 1. Spesimen dari tiap bagian sampel KKS diambil dengan ukuran  $15 \times 2 \times 2,5 \text{ cm}^3$  memanjang serat batang. Sebelum perlakuan, spesimen dibersihkan dan dikeringkan dalam vakum pada suhu  $40^\circ\text{C}$  sampai berat tetap.



Gambar 1. Bagian dari sampel batang sawit pada pengambilan spesimen: P = bagian periperal, M = tengah, dan C = inti.

### Impregnasi spesimen kayu kelapa sawit

Untuk meningkatkan kualitas dan ketahanan KKS terhadap serangan cuaca dan serangga dilakukan teknik impregnasi menggunakan resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dalam berbagai pelarut. 150 ml larutan RPM tersebut dengan variasi konsentrasi (0, 5, 10, 15, dan 20%) dan variasi pelarut (kloroform, aseton, dan etanol) ditempatkan di dalam gelas ukur 500 ml. Spesimen kering dari berbagai bagian sampel KKS (P, M, dan C), diimpregnasi

selama 48 jam pada suhu kamar ( $30^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), dengan sistem tertutup. Prosedur impregnasi diulangi dengan adanya asam akrilat (AA), dengan rasio berat AA/RPM: 0/10, 2/8, 4/6, 6/4, 8/2, dan 10/0, serta benzoil peroksida 0,01%. Setelah impregnasi, pelarut yang tertinggal diuapkan pada suhu kamar dan udara terbuka, dan kemudian dalam vakum pada suhu  $40^{\circ}\text{C}$  sampai berat tetap.

### Karakterisasi spesimen KKS

Sebelum dan sesudah impregnasi spesimen KKS dikarakterisasi dan dibandingkan dengan karakteristik kayu standar untuk bangunan, yang meliputi pengamatan: kerapatan ( $d$ :  $\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ ), modulus patah (MOR:  $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ ), dan modulus elastisitas (MOE:  $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ ), menggunakan rumus berikut:

$$\begin{aligned} d &= W/V \text{ g}/\text{cm}^3 \\ \text{MOR} &= 3 P L / 2 I t^2 \text{ kg}/\text{cm}^2 \\ \text{MOE} &= P' L^3 / 4 y I t^3 \text{ kg}/\text{cm}^2 \end{aligned}$$

- $W$  = berat spesimen (g)
- $V$  = volume spesimen ( $\text{cm}^3$ )
- $P$  = beban patah (kg)
- $P'$  = beban pada yield (kg)
- $L$  = jarak sangga (cm)
- $I$  = lebar spesimen (cm)
- $t$  = tebal spesimen (cm)
- $y$  = jarak defleksi (cm)

Pengamatan sifat mekanis spesimen dilakukan dengan cara uji tekuk 3 titik

## HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

### Karakteristik KKS Segar

Spesimen kering KKS segar sebelum impregnasi dikarakterisasi yang mencakup

pengamatan : kerapatan ( $d$ ), modulus patah (MOR), dan modulus elastisitas (MOE). Data karakterisasi dari 3 bagian sampel KKS (P, M, dan C) terlihat pada Tabel 1. Ternyata bahwa sifat fisik dan mekanis spesimen (kerapatan, MOR, dan MOE) menurun bila dibandingkan dari bagian periperal (P) ke bagian tengah (M), dan bagian inti (C) dari sampel batang sawit. Hal ini berkaitan dengan sifat alamiah KKS, sebagai kayu monokotil, yang mempunyai kerapatan serat menurun dari bagian periperal ke bagian inti batang.

Tabel 1. Karakteristik sifat fisik dan mekanis spesimen kering dan segar dari kayu kelapa sawit (KKS)

Spesimen	Kerapatan ( $\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ )	Jumlah serat (per $\text{cm}^2$ )	MOR ( $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ )	MOE ( $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ )
Periperal (P)	0,53	67	217	15685
Tengah (M)	0,42	52	194	9473
Inti (C)	0,39	39	127	780

### Impregnasi dengan resin *Pinus merkusii*

Jenis pelarut mempengaruhi efisiensi impregnasi, dengan efisiensi yang naik bila konsentrasi resin semakin besar (Tabel 2). Impregnasi dengan konsentrasi resin  $>20\%$  tidak dapat dilaksanakan karena kelarutan maksimum RPM tidak lebih besar dari 20%, khususnya dalam pelarut etanol. Oleh karena itu, dipilih konsentrasi optimum proses impregnasi adalah 20% dalam pelarut aseton, yang mungkin berhubungan dengan kemampuan pelarut aseton dalam mengembangkan kembali pori-pori KKS. Diketahui bahwa seperti halnya kayu

monokotil lainnya, KKS mempunyai jaringan parenkhim di antara bundel-bundel seratnya, yang semula dalam kayu segar masih mengandung air. Setelah pengeringan, jaringan ini membentuk pori-pori yang cenderung menyerap cairan polar sejenis air, seperti aseton dan etanol. Oleh karena alasan ini maka efisiensi impregnasi dalam pelarut kloroform lebih rendah bila dibandingkan dalam pelarut aseton dan etanol.

Tabel 2. Karakteristik dari spesimen KKS bagian periperal setelah impregnasi dengan resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dalam berbagai pelarut dan konsentrasi

Konsentrasi RPM (%)	Kerapatan (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )	Pengembangan (%)	MOR (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	MOE (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Dalam kloroform</b>				
0	0,53	0,0	217	15685
5	0,53	1,8	241	16543
10	0,54	2,8	301	18765
15	0,55	3,2	354	20120
20	0,56	3,6	368	21372
<b>Dalam aseton</b>				
0	0,53	0,0	217	15685
5	0,56	2,3	264	20732
10	0,58	3,3	342	35429
15	0,59	4,7	587	54760
20	0,61	5,8	635	64984
<b>Dalam etanol</b>				
0	0,53	0,0	217	15685
5	0,55	1,8	246	17659
10	0,55	2,2	265	20190
15	0,58	4,2	376	24065
20	0,59	5,1	415	26511

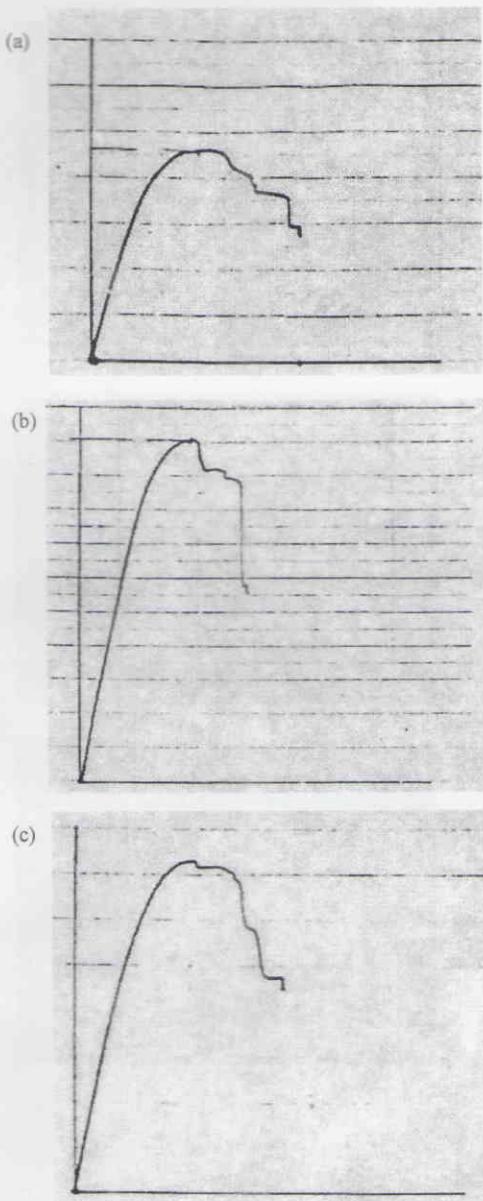
Dalam hal pelarut etanol, laju difusinya ke dalam jaringan parenkhim sebenarnya lebih besar daripada pelarut aseton, tetapi kelarutan RPM dalam etanol lebih rendah. Hal ini menyebabkan efisiensi impregnasi dalam pelarut etanol lebih

rendah bila dibandingkan dengan dalam pelarut aseton.

Tabel 2 juga memperlihatkan sifat mekanis (MOR dan MOE) dari spesimen KKS setelah impregnasi, yang menunjukkan adanya kenaikan sifat mekanis dari KKS. Semakin besar konsentrasi RPM dalam larutan pengimpregnasi, sifat mekanis (MOR dan MOE) dari KKS terimpregnasi semakin baik. Hal ini mungkin sehubungan dengan kemampuan RPM untuk mengikat bundel-bundel serat dalam jaringan parenkhim KKS terimpregnasi. Sifat-sifat fisik dan mekanis spesimen KKS terimpregnasi ini memadai dengan karakteristik bahan kayu bangunan kelas III.

#### Impregnasi menggunakan resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dan asam akrilat (AA)

Perubahan sifat fisik dan mekanis spesimen KKS setelah impregnasi menggunakan berbagai rasio RPM/AA disajikan pada Tabel 3. Diketahui bahwa kenaikan rasio AA dalam larutan pengimpregnasi menurunkan efisiensi impregnasi. Mekanisme difusi dalam impregnasi menggunakan campuran RPM/AA ini belum dapat dijelaskan, dan akan diselidiki pada penelitian yang akan datang. Dalam hal lain, sifat mekanis (MOR dan MOE) dari spesimen terimpregnasi juga menurun dengan kenaikan rasio AA. Hal ini mungkin disebabkan oleh pembentukan (poli) asam akrilat yang mempunyai berat molekul lebih besar tetapi dengan sifat mekanis lebih rendah bila dibandingkan dengan RPM. Contoh kurva tegangan-regangan dari uji tekuk 3 titik untuk spesimen KKS sebelum dan sesudah impregnasi menggunakan RPM dan campuran RPM/AA terlihat pada Gambar 2.



Gambar 2. Contoh kurva tegangan-regangan uji tekuk 3 titik untuk spesimen: (a) sebelum, (b) sudah impregnasi menggunakan RPM, dan (c) campuran RPM/AA (ratio 6/4)

Tabel 3. Karakteristik dari spesimen KKS (bagian periperal, tengah: dan inti) setelah impregnasi dengan berbagai rasio berat resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dan asam akrilat (AA), konsentrasi total 20% dalam pelarut aseton, dengan adanya benzoil peroksida 0,01% sebagai inisiator

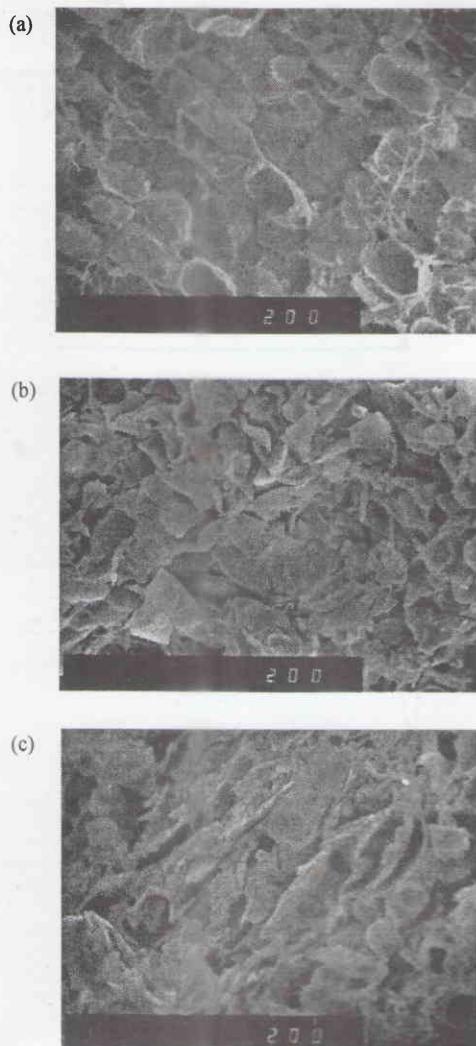
RPM/AA (ratio/berat)	Kerapatan (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )	Pengembang (%)	MOR (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	MOE (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Spesimen periperal</b>				
10/0	0,61	5,8	635	64984
8/2	0,57	4,5	543	52876
6/4	0,56	3,7	498	45980
4/6	0,55	2,8	420	41908
2/8	0,55	2,3	368	38705
0/10	0,55	1,7	349	37312
<b>Spesimen tengah</b>				
10/0	0,56	6,7	475	22172
8/2	0,56	5,5	410	19784
6/4	0,53	4,7	342	13985
4/6	0,50	3,8	265	7659
2/8	0,50	3,8	254	6509
0/10	0,47	3,7	210	6340
<b>Spesimen inti</b>				
10/0	0,40	10,1	154	10274
8/2	0,38	8,9	132	8760
6/4	0,35	6,2	89	5648
4/6	0,33	5,5	83	5296
2/8	0,33	5,3	75	4821
0/10	0,32	4,2	63	4190

#### Efisiensi impregnasi resin *Pinus merkusii* dalam kayu kelapa sawit

Untuk menyelidiki kedalaman impregnasi resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dalam kayu kelapa sawit (KKS) dilakukan pengamatan mikroskop elektron payaran (SEM) dan spektroskopi inframerah. Untuk uji mikroskopis dilakukan pengamatan pada permukaan luar spesimen sampel KKS sebelum impregnasi (Gambar 3a) dan sesudah impregnasi (Gambar 3b), serta

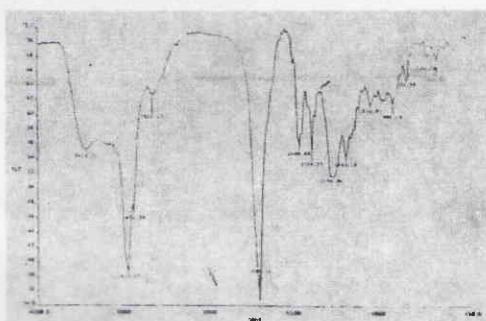
bagian tengah spesimen setelah impregnasi (Gambar 3c, spesimen dibelah dua). Pada Gambar 3a, foto SEM perbesaran 200 kali, permukaan luar spesimen KKS kering sebelum impregnasi memperlihatkan rongga-rongga parenkhim yang kosong, yang semula dalam KKS segar terisi oleh air. Setelah impregnasi, ternyata semua rongga parenkhim pada permukaan luar spesimen tersebut (Gambar 3b) telah terisi dengan RPM, demikian juga untuk permukaan bagian tengah (Gambar 3c). Bila dibandingkan antara foto SEM spesimen bagian luar setelah impregnasi dengan bagian dalamnya (Gambar 3b dengan 3c), terlihat bahwa masih terdapat rongga parenkhim kosong yang belum terisi dengan RPM pada bagian tengah spesimen. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa proses impregnasi menggunakan larutan 20% RPM dalam aseton selama 48 jam telah mencapai bagian tengah spesimen KKS, walaupun dalam jumlah yang lebih kecil bila dibandingkan dengan pada bagian permukaan luar spesimen.

Penyelidikan lebih lanjut dilakukan menggunakan teknik spektroskopi inframerah dari serbuk sampel RPM maupun KKS sebelum dan sesudah impregnasi, yang semuanya dianalisis dalam bentuk pelet KBr. Gambar 4 adalah spektrum inframerah dari serbuk RPM dalam pelet KBr, yang menunjukkan puncak serapan tajam karakteristik gugus karbonil ( $>\text{C}=\text{O}$ ) pada  $1697 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Gambar 5 adalah spektrum inframerah serbuk KKS sebelum impregnasi, yang menunjukkan puncak serapan melebar karakteristik gugus hidroksil (-OH) pada  $3300 - 3600 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  dan puncak-puncak serapan sidik jari lainnya (pada  $1400$  dan  $1035 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ).

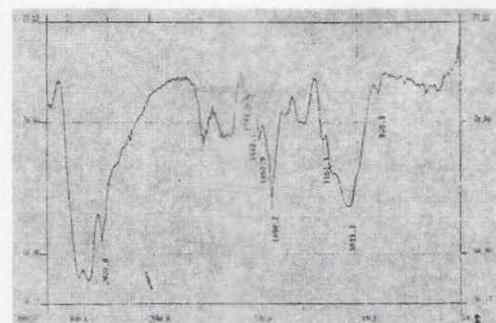


Gambar 3. Foto SEM (perbesaran 200 kali) dari (a) permukaan luar spesimen KKS sebelum impregnasi, (b) permukaan luar spesimen KKS setelah impregnasi dengan RPM, (c) permukaan bagian tengah (setelah dibelah dua) dari spesimen KKS setelah impregnasi dengan RPM

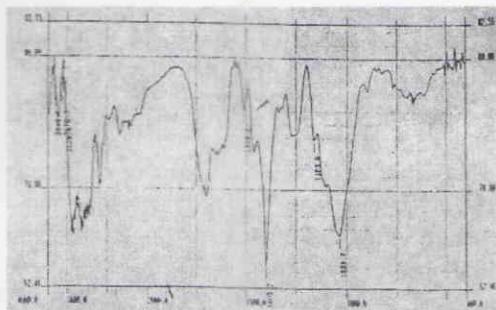
Bila dibandingkan dengan spektrum serbuk KKS bagian permukaan luar setelah impregnasi (Gambar 6), terlihat puncak-puncak serapan karakteristik KKS seperti pada Gambar 5, dan ditambah dengan munculnya puncak serapan karakteristik gugus  $>\text{C}=\text{O}$  dari RPM. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam serbuk KKS bagian permukaan luar yang terimpregnasi tersebut memang terdapat RPM, seperti yang diperlihatkan dari foto SEM Gambar 3b. Selanjutnya, Gambar 7 adalah spektrum inframerah serbuk KKS bagian tengah setelah impregnasi, yang juga menunjukkan adanya serapan gugus  $>\text{C}=\text{O}$  dari RPM, selain juga puncak-puncak serapan karakteristik KKS. Dari kenyataan ini terlihat bahwa setelah proses impregnasi resin pinus merkusii dapat terdifusi sampai ke bagian tengah spesimen KKS. Akan tetapi masih sukar untuk mengestimasi kandungan RPM di bagian tengah spesimen dibandingkan dengan pada bagian pinggirnya, karena pencampuran serbuk sampel KKS dengan serbuk KBr pada penyediaan sampel uji spektroskopi inframerah di atas tidak dilakukan secara kuantitatif.



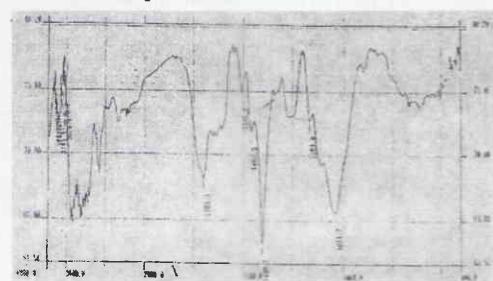
Gambar 4. Spektrum inframerah serbuk resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) dalam pelet KBr



Gambar 5. Spektrum inframerah serbuk kayu kelapa sawit (KKS) sebelum impregnasi, dalam pelet KBr



Gambar 6. Spektrum inframerah serbuk kayu kelapa sawit (KKS) bagian luar spesimen setelah impregnasi dengan RPM, dalam pelet KBr.



Gambar 7. Spektrum inframerah serbuk kayu kelapa sawit (KKS) bagian tengah spesimen setelah impregnasi dengan RPM, dalam pelet KBr

## KESIMPULAN

Impregnasi menggunakan resin *Pinus merkusii* (RPM) meningkatkan sifat fisik dan mekanis kayu kelapa sawit dan setara dengan karakteristik kayu standar bangunan kelas III. Diharapkan juga bahwa KKS terimpregnasi tersebut akan lebih tahan terhadap pengaruh cuaca dan serangan serangga, yang akan dikonfirmasikan dengan uji biodekomposisi. Impregnasi KKS menggunakan larutan 20% RPM dalam pelarut aseton selama 48 jam telah mendifusikan RPM sampai ke bagian tengah spesimen.

Diketahui bahwa impregnasi menggunakan teknik larutan mahal biayanya dan kurang bersahabat dengan lingkungan karena penguapan pelarut dalam jumlah besar. Karena itu, teknik impregnasi tanpa pelarut dalam fase leleh suhu panas dan tekanan tinggi akan dikembangkan lebih lanjut.

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## Impregnation of oil palm wood using *Pinus merkusii* resin and acrylic acid

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### Abstract

*Oil palm wood (OPW), which is available continuously in large scale, has not been utilized economically due to its low quality, low homogeneity, and irresisitivity against aggressive environment and insects. On the other hand, resin produced from pine tree of *Pinus merkusii* is a by-product of forestry industry, and has been used in processing of wood for building. Due to high demand of wood for building in Indonesia, the OPW is gaining attention as one of alternative sources of wood processing. In this work, the OPW was processed using impregnation technique with *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) in various solvents and concentrations to improve its quality and resistivity against harsh weather and aggressive insects. Acrylic acid was also added to enhance interaction between impregnate resin matrix and the surface of wood fibre during curing process in the presence of a peroxide as initiator. Characteristics of the impregnated OPW were compared to those of standard woods for construction.*

Kata kunci: oil palm wood, impregnation, *Pinus merkusii* resin, construction wood

### Introduction

In this decade, oil palm plantation in Indonesia has been developing in an accelerated rate, in which 1995 – 2005 prediction its total area will expand from 2.7 to 4.5 million hectares. If every year 10% of the area has to be replanted, will be produced 11.7 million oil palm trees, which is equivalent to 5.85 million tons of woods yearly (9). Therefore, the OPW can be used as an alternative source of wood for building, since demand for wood this year is reaching 80 million m<sup>3</sup>, whereas the supply is only 49 million m<sup>3</sup>. However, oil palm wood (OPW) so far has not been utilised economically, which mainly due to its low quality, low homogeneity, and easy to decompose under the influence of harsh weather and aggressive insects. On the other hand, *Pinus merkusii* has been planted widely for greening programs in critical land, and is one of the best raw ma-

terials for pulp and paper making. By-product of the greening program is a resin tapped from the bark of the pine tree, which can be used for turpentine production and in processing of soft woods in order to produce better quality and more resistant wood against aggressive weather and insects.

A blend of wood material and cellulose derivatives with polymer matrix has been carried out to produce various composites for engineering materials (1,5). Furthermore, Shiraishi (11) has also exploited plasticization technique using impregnation method with plasticizer and structure modification of cellulose molecule of the wood materials. Due to increasing specification of wood materials, nowadays, impregnation techniques with polymeric matrix is gaining attention to improve quality of commodity woods. Li *et al.* (6) have used esterification reaction to improve dimensional stability and fire resistant properties of wood materials. Minato *et al.* (7) used

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impregnation technique to modify physical and chemical properties of woods using natural phenolic compounds. Schut (10), reported that impregnated woods with thermoplastic have successfully developed and commercialised. Cooperative Research Centre for Polymer Blends (2) in Australia has also reported utilisation of plastic wastes and recycled paper to produce wood substitute materials. Several researches have used oil palm wood powder from, empty bunches, fronds, and stems, as fillers for polypropylene plastics (14,15). Ismail and Hasliza (3) and Ismail and Jaffri (4) have used oil palm wood powder for rubber reinforcements. Wirjosentono *et al.* (12, 13) have used empty fruit bunches powders as fillers for polyolefins, which still possess good mechanical properties, but degradable after being used under the influence of microorganisms and UV radiation in sunlight.

## Materials and Methods

### Preparation of OPW specimens

Oil palm tree of 25 years old Dura species was chosen from Aek Pancur plantation of Indonesian Oil Palm Research Institute in Medan. The 15 meter height oil palm tree was cut, and the 1 meter sample log was taken from the middle height of the trunk (i.e. 7 meter above the ground). The sample log was peeled off and sliced to form wood pillars of  $5 \times 5 \text{ cm}^2$  in their cross-sectional area, which were then dried in an open air under direct sunlight. The OPW specimens were  $15 \times 2 \times 2.5 \text{ cm}^3$  in size, and were taken from the Outer or Peripheral (P), Middle (M), and Center (C) parts of the sample log as shown in Fig. 1. Before any treatment the specimens

were cleaned and further dried in vacuum at  $40^\circ\text{C}$  to constant weight.

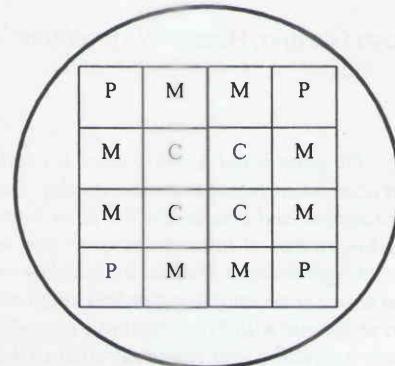


Figure 1. Parts of sample log from which specimens were taken out. P: peripheral, M: middle, and C: center parts.

### Impregnation of the OPW specimens

To improve quality and resistivity of the OPW, impregnation technique using the *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) in the wood was carried out in various solvents. PMR solutions of 150 ml at varied concentrations (0, 5, 10, 15, and 20%) and in various solvents (chloroform, acetone, and ethanol) were placed in 500 ml measuring cylinder. The dried OPW specimens were impregnated for 48 hours at room ( $30^\circ\text{C}$ ) in a closed system. The impregnation procedures were also done in the presence of acrylic acid (AA) (ratio to resin: 0/10, 2/8, 4/6, 6/4, 8/2, and 10/0) and benzoyl peroxide (0.01%). After impregnation, the remaining solvents were evaporated at room temperature, open air, and under vacuum at  $40^\circ\text{C}$  to constant weight.

### Characterization of the OPW specimens

Before and after impregnation the OPW specimens were characterized and

compared to those of standard wood for building, which includes measurements of density ( $d$ :  $\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ ), modulus of rupture (MOR:  $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ ), and modulus of elasticity (MOE:  $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ ), using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} d &= W/V \text{ g}/\text{cm}^3 \\ \text{MOR} &= 3 P L / 2 I t^2 \text{ kg}/\text{cm}^2 \\ \text{MOE} &= P' L^3 / 4 y I t^3 \text{ kg}/\text{cm}^2 \end{aligned}$$

where:

- $W$  = weight of specimen (g)
- $V$  = volume of specimen ( $\text{cm}^3$ )
- $P$  = load at break (kg)
- $P'$  = load at yield (kg)
- $L$  = distance of supports (cm)
- $I$  = width of specimen (cm)
- $t$  = thickness of specimen (cm)
- $y$  = distance of deflection (cm)

The mechanical properties measurements were carried out by 3-points compression bending tests.

## Results and Discussions

### Characteristics of fresh OPW

Dried specimens of fresh OPW before impregnation were characterized, which includes measurements of density, fiber density, modulus of rupture (MOR), and modulus of elasticity (MOE). Characteristic data of the 3 kinds of OPW specimens (P, M, and C) are shown in Table 1. It was revealed that the physical and mechanical properties of the specimens (density, MOR and MOE) decreased from the peripheral to the middle and to the centre of the OPW log. This is due to the natural property of the OPW, like other monocotyledonous woods, which possesses fiber density

higher in the peripheral and lower in the centre of the log.

Table 1. Physical and mechanical characteristics of dried and fresh oil palm wood (OPW) specimens

Specimen	Density ( $\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ )	Number of fiber per $\text{cm}^2$	MOR ( $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ )	MOE ( $\text{kg}/\text{cm}^2$ )
Peripheral (P)	0.53	67	217	15685
Middle (M)	0.42	52	194	9473
Center (C)	0.39	39	127	780

### Impregnation using *Pinus merkusii* resin

From data shown in Table 2, type of solvents and resin concentrations affect efficiency of the impregnation. It was revealed that the impregnation efficiency was higher when concentration was increased. However, impregnation using higher concentration above 20% was not carried out since maximum solubility of the resin in the solvents were not higher than 20%, especially in ethanol solvent. Therefore, optimum efficiency of impregnation was found in acetone solvent at 20% resin concentration, which may be related to the expansion of the OPW pores by the acetone solvent. It is well known that like other monocotyledonous woods, the OPW possesses parenchymatous tissue in between the fiber bundles, which in the fresh OPW the tissue mainly contains water. After drying, the tissue forms pores and tends to absorb polar solvents similar to water, such as acetone and ethanol. Because of this reason, efficiency of impreg-

nation using chloroform solvent was less effective when compared to those using acetone or ethanol solvents. In the case of ethanol solvent, its diffusion in the parenchymatous tissue actually higher than those of acetone, but solubility of the PMR in ethanol was less than in acetone. This resulted in a lower efficiency of impregnation using ethanol solvent compared to using acetone.

Table 2. Characteristics of OPW specimens (peripheral parts) after impregnation with *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) in various solvents and concentrations

Concentration PMR (%)	Density (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )	Development (%)	MOR (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	MOE (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )
<b>In Chloroform</b>				
0	0.53	0.0	217	15685
5	0.53	1.8	241	16543
10	0.54	2.8	301	18765
15	0.55	3.2	354	20120
20	0.56	3.6	368	21372
<b>In Aceton</b>				
0	0.53	0.0	217	15685
5	0.56	2.3	264	20732
10	0.58	3.3	342	35429
15	0.59	4.7	587	54760
20	0.61	5.8	635	64984
<b>In Ethanol</b>				
0	0.53	0.0	217	15685
5	0.55	1.8	246	17659
10	0.55	2.2	265	20190
15	0.58	4.2	376	24065
20	0.59	5.1	415	26511

Table 2 also shows mechanical properties (MOR and MOE) of OPW specimens after impregnation, which reveals improvements in physical and mechanical properties of the OPW. The higher the concentration of the impregnating PMR, the better the mechanical properties (MOR and MOE) of the impregnated OPW. This indicates ability of the impregnating PMR to bind the fibre bundles in the parenchymatous tissue of the OPW. The improved properties of the impregnated OPW are similar to those of standard Grade III of woods for building.

#### Impregnation using *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) and acrylic acid (AA)

Table 3 shows changes of physical and mechanical properties of the OPW after impregnation using various weight ratio of PMR and acrylic acid (AA). It was shown that increased in AA ratio in the impregnating resin solutions resulted in decrease of impregnation efficiency. Mechanism of resin diffusion in the impregnation of the OPW using the PMR and AA mixtures has not fully understood and will be further studied in future works. Meanwhile, mechanical properties (MOR and MOE) of the impregnated specimens have also decreased with the increase of AA ratio. This is due to that the lower mechanical properties of poly-acrylic acid compared to those of PMR. Stress-strain curves of the 3-points bending tests for specimens before and after impregnation using PMR and PMR/AA mixture are shown in Figure 2.

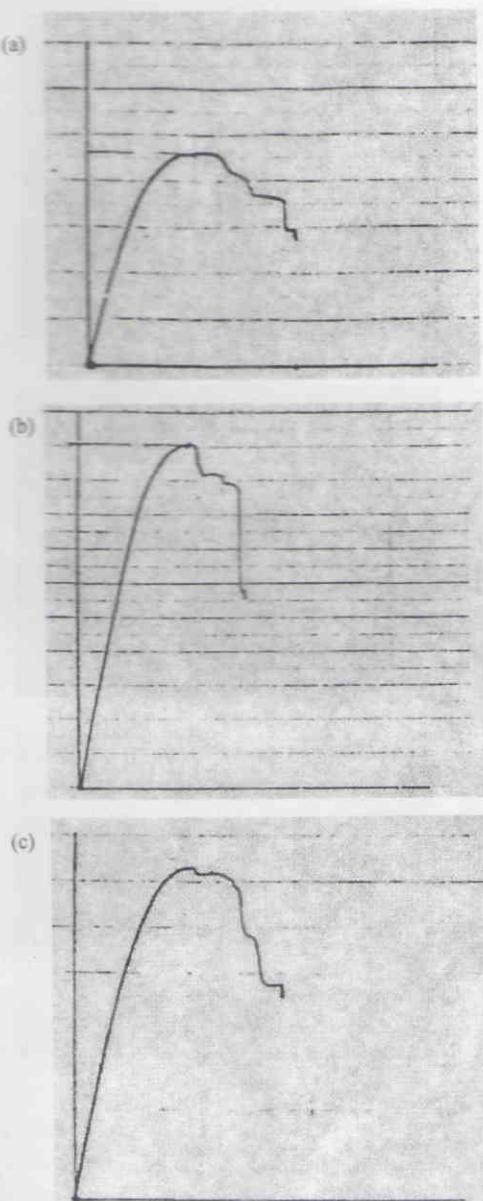


Figure 2. Stress-strain curves of the 3-points bending tests for specimens: (a) before and (b) after impregnation using PMR and (c) PMR/AA mixture (ratio 6/4)

Table 3. Characteristics of OPW specimens (peripheral, middle, and centre parts) after impregnation with various weight ratio of *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) and acrylic acid (AA), total concentration: 20% in acetone solvent, in the presence of 0.01% of benzoyl peroxide as initiator

PMR/AA (ratio/weight)	Density (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )	Development (%)	MOR (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	MOE (kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Peripheral</b>				
10/0	0.61	5.8	635	64984
8/2	0.57	4.5	543	52876
6/4	0.56	3.7	498	45980
4/6	0.55	2.8	420	41908
2/8	0.55	2.3	368	38705
0/10	0.55	1.7	349	37312
<b>Middle</b>				
10/0	0.56	6.7	475	22172
8/2	0.56	5.5	410	19784
6/4	0.53	4.7	342	13985
4/6	0.50	3.8	265	7659
2/8	0.50	3.8	254	6509
0/10	0.47	3.7	210	6340
<b>Center</b>				
10/0	0.40	10.1	154	10274
8/2	0.38	8.9	132	8760
6/4	0.35	6.2	89	5648
4/6	0.33	5.5	83	5296
2/8	0.33	5.3	75	4821
0/10	0.32	4.2	63	4190

#### Investigation of efficiency of impregnation of *Pinus merkusii* Resin (PMR) into oil palm wood (OPW)

The depth of impregnation of *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) into oil palm wood (OPW) was investigated by observation using electron microscopy as well as analysis using infrared spectroscopy. Electron microscopic observations (magnification 200 times) were carried out on the

outer surface of the OPW specimen before (Figure 3a) and after impregnation (Figure 3b), as well as on the middle surface of the specimen after impregnation (Figure 3c), i.e. the impregnated specimen was cut symmetrically parallel to its length. Figure 3a, i.e. SEM photograph of outer surface of dried OPW specimen before impregnation showed parenchimatosus voids, which previously in the fresh OPW were filled by water. After impregnation the parenchimatosus voids on the outer surface (Figure 3b) as well as of the middle surface (Figure 3c) were all filled by PMR. However, when compared to that of outer surface of the specimen, after impregnation middle surface of the specimen showed less PMR content with few unfilled parenchimatosus voids (compare Figure 3b with Figure 3c). This indicated that impregnation process using 20% PMR solution in acetone for 48 hours has successfully diffused the PMR into the middle part of the specimen, although in lower amount compared to that on the outer surface.

Further investigation was carried out using infrared spectroscopic technique of various samples in KBr discs: i.e. fresh RPM powder, fresh OPW powder, as well as outer part nad middle part of impregnated OPW samples. Figure 4 is infrared spectrum of fresh RPM in KBr disc, which shows sharp absorption peak of carbonyl group ( $>\text{C}=\text{O}$ ) at  $1697\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Figure 5 is infrared spectrum of fresh OPW sample before impregnation, which shows broad absorption peak of hydroxyl group (-OH) at  $3300 - 3600\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , in addition of other finger print peaks (at  $1400$  and  $1035\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ).

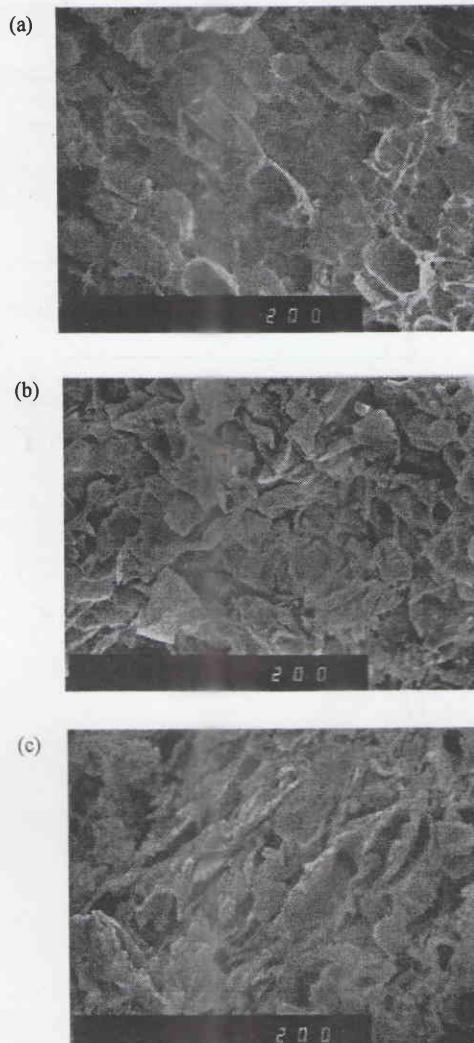
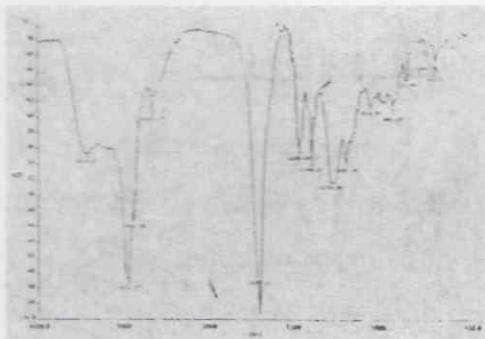
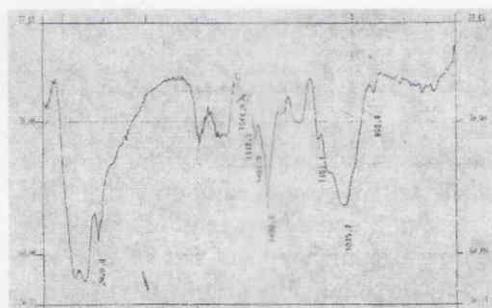


Figure 3. SEM photographs (magnification 200 times) of: (a) outer surface of fresh OPW specimen before impregnation, (b) outer surface of OPW specimen after impregnation with PMR, (c) middle surface (specimen was divided in two parts) of OPW specimen after impregnation with PMR

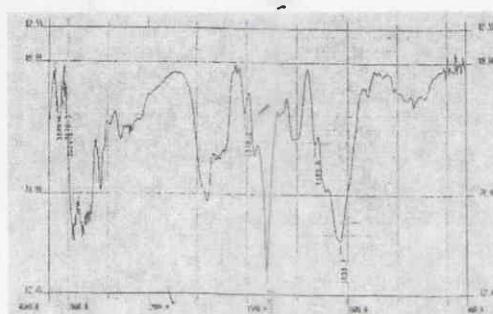
When these infrared spectra were compared to that outer part of impregnated OPW (Figure 6), the latest spectrum shows all characteristic peaks of fresh OPW as shown in Figure 5, in addition to appearance of carbonyl peak of the RPM at around  $1700\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . This indicates that on the outer surface of the impregnated OPW specimen contains PMR. Moreover, Figure 7 which is infrared spectrum of middle part of the impregnated OPW, also shows identical peaks of fresh OPW as well as characteristic carbonyl peak of the PMR similar to those of infrared spectrum in Figure 4c. It was revealed therefore, that after impregnation process, the PMR was able to diffuse into the middle part of the OPW specimen, as shown by SEM photograph in Figures 3b and 3c. However, it is difficult to quantify and compare the PMR contents in both outer and middle parts of the impregnated OPW, since addition of the OPW samples in the preparation of the KBr discs for infrared spectroscopic analysis was not carried out quantitatively.



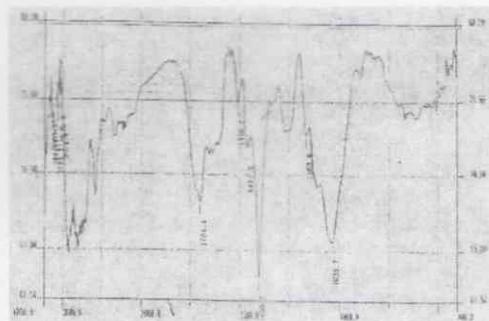
**Figure 4.** Infrared spectrum of fresh *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR) in KBr disc



**Figure 5.** Infrared spectra (in KBr disc) of fresh oil palm wood (OPW) before impregnation



**Figure 6.** Infrared spectrum (in KBr disc) of outer part of oil palm wood (OPW) specimen after impregnation with PMR



**Figure 7.** Infrared spectrum (in KBr disc) of middle part of oil palm wood (OPW) specimen after impregnation with PMR

### Conclusions

It was found that after impregnation using *Pinus merkusii* resin (PMR), physical and mechanical properties of the oil palm woods (OPW) have been improved similar to those of Standard Grade III of woods for building. Impregnation of the OPW using 20% PMR solution in acetone for 48 hours has diffused the PMR into the middle part of the specimen. It is expected also that the impregnated OPW will be more resistant to harsh weather and aggressive insects, which will be confirmed by biodegradation tests. For future works, the role of acrylic acid (AA) in the PMR/AA mixtures on the impregnation efficiency and improvements of physical and mechanical properties of the impregnated OPW will be studied. It is understood that impregnation using solution techniques is costly and not environmentally friendly due to the use and evaporation of solvents in large scale. Therefore, a reactive impregnation technique without solvents but in melting phase at higher temperature and pressure will be further developed.

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