

THE WINNER OF THE INNOVATION IN NATURAL FIBRES AWARD 2025 ORGANIZED BY THE DISCOVER NATURAL FIBRES INITIATIVE

February 2026

[The Discover Natural Fibres Initiative has announced the winner of the DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award 2025.](#)

The winner was Mohammad Faraz, a Master's student at [Buitems University](#) in Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. His co-author is Qasim Siddiqui and the industry partner is Muhammad Fawad Farooq.

The article on the DNFI website informs that "Faraz's research presents a fully sustainable, end-to-end workflow for producing high-performance banana and cotton fibre-reinforced epoxy composites using chemical-free, solar-powered mechanical extraction and traceable fabrication methods. The approach addresses critical gaps in current processes for producing natural fibre composites by emphasizing reproducibility, a reduced carbon footprint, and standards-grade mechanical testing that ensures readiness for engineering adoption. The initial application for this process is automotive interiors. (World production of banana and plantain fibres is estimated at a relatively minor 4,000 tonnes in 2025, but there is significant opportunity for growth. Banana fibres are harvested from the stems of banana plants. Based on average ratios, up to 7 million tonnes of fibre could be produced by the ten largest banana producing countries ([Fibral Material Alliance](#)). Faraz has developed a process to produce biocomposites using mechanically decorticated banana fibres. The fibres are cleaned through water immersion, jet rinsing, and manual removal of impurities, and solar-dried to a stable moisture content of 8–12%. Dried fibres measuring ≥ 60 cm in length, and with diameters ranging from 50 to 200 μm , are combed and spun into 1.87 Ne (531 tex) yarns using a solar-powered twisting system. Blended fabrics are woven using cotton warp yarns (32/1 Ne, 66 ends per inch) and banana fibre weft yarns (15 picks per inch). The resulting plain-weave fabrics are washed and dried and fabricated into composites with an epoxy resin system".

The formal award ceremony to honor Mohammad Faraz and Qasim Siddiqui as well as Fawad Farooq was held on Thursday 15 January 2026 during the [Heimtextil fair in Frankfurt](#), Germany.

The DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award aims to promote the development of new products components and applications using natural fibres as well as new processes for the manufacturing of environmentally friendly products. Universities, institutes, industry and individuals working in the area of scientific research are invited to participate. Sustainability should be one important aspect of each submission considered by the judges. The DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award aims to recognize the innovations as well as the people and institutions responsible for them with the goal of raising public awareness of the achievements of the natural fibre sector as a whole.



The Innovation in Natural Fibres Award was launched for the first time in 2017. The organizers highlight the current increased interest in natural fibres and the opportunity to emphasize the unbeatable properties of naturally made materials, such as their biodegradable and renewable features. The potential of natural fibres is the future and the Award intends to help make it known. The evaluation criteria are: outstanding scientific work and technical feasibility, the extent of improvement or effectiveness of the innovation compared to existing products or processes in which the innovation has been implemented, and the potential for opening up new markets or sectors for products made from natural fibres. The [press release published in 2023 on the DNFI website](#) presents the previous winners of the Innovation in Natural Fibres Award.

The Discover Natural Fibres Initiative is a platform implemented to facilitate the exchange of information, experiences and work to put forward the common interests of all natural fibres in the face of competition with oil-based and wood-based manmade fibres. Representatives of various natural fibre industries such as [Abaca](#), [Alpaca](#), [Angora](#), [Camel](#), [Cashmere](#), [Coir](#), [Cotton](#), [Flax](#), [Hemp](#), [Jute](#), [Mohair](#), [Ramie](#), [Silk](#), [Sisal](#) and [Wool](#) participate in DNFI.

The [DNFI Initiative](#) was implemented to continue supporting the objectives of the *2009 International Year of Natural Fibres IYNF* declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations and aimed at raising global awareness of the importance of natural fibres not only to producers and industry, but also to consumers and the environment. DNFI facilitates communication and collaboration through the exchange of information, including statistics on fibre production, value and employment, and updates on developments in fibre markets. DNFI raises awareness through reports, press releases and seminars, and encourages innovation through the annual award. [Membership in DNFI is open to anyone with an interest in the growth of natural fibre industries](#). The DNFI website invites other interested organizations to join the Discover Natural Fibres Initiative as a member.

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