

ACIAR  
GENDER  
EQUITY  
POLICY and  
STRATEGY  
2017 - 2021

December 2017

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## FOREWORD

More than half the world's farmers are women. The empirical evidence is clear that women are disproportionately affected by poverty. Ensuring women have equal access to resources and decision making is a direct route to reducing poverty for all.

Similarly, in wealthy industrialised countries, in both the public and private sectors, hard evidence suggests that organisations that draw equally on the talents of women and men at all levels outperform those that do not.

Accordingly, it is clear that ACIAR cannot credibly pursue our strategic objectives around food security, poverty reduction, human health and nutrition or climate change, unless we also promote gender equity vigorously, internally and externally.

This strategy and policy document provides an articulation of that intent, and a map of how we intend to achieve it.

This policy and strategy complements our ten-year Strategic Vision 2018-2028, and gives us a pathway to deliver on the aspirations of that vision. For my own part, I am looking forward to making further progress inside ACIAR, and to deepening our external engagement on gender equity and women's empowerment. I have learned a lot through the development of this policy and strategy, and through my engagement with the *Male Champions of Change* program. Encouraged by ACIAR colleagues, I have taken 'the panel pledge' not to accept invitations to speak at events if part of an all-male panel.

We need to 'walk the talk' with our commitment to tackle deeply entrenched bias around women in science, and women in agriculture. ACIAR works at the intersection of agriculture and science, and as research investors and brokers across more than 30 countries, we have an important leadership role.

I look forward to our performance being assessed against this strategy in years to come.



Andrew Campbell

Chief Executive

December 2017

**List of Acronyms**

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
APSED	Australian Public Service Employment Database
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
G20	Group of Twenty international forum
LES	Locally Engaged Staff (DFAT term) Country Office staff (ACIAR term)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SAGE	Science in Australia Gender Equity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equity Agency

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS<sup>1</sup>

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men.

**Gender equality** or equality between women and men refers to the equal enjoyment by men and women of all ages of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that men and women are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born male or female.

**Gender equity** refers to fair treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women, such as empowering women to bring them up to an equal playing field with men. Gender equity and equality must be pursued in a complementary manner where gender equality is the ultimate goal.

**Gender inclusive** is where the needs of both women and men are considered and addressed.

**Gender mainstreaming** refers to the process whereby needs and interests of both women and men are taken into account systematically across all programmes, projects and organisational structures.

**Gender roles** are those behaviours, tasks and responsibilities that a society considers appropriate for men, women, boys and girls

**Sex-disaggregated data** is data that provides a breakdown of men's and women's activities and perspectives by collecting separate data on men and women. Data can also be disaggregated by age, location, ethnic group, education, income and other demographic variables to help understand the differences between groups and to effectively target interventions and solutions.

**Women's empowerment** is a political and transformative process that analyses and challenges not only patriarchy, but also the mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity and economic structures that determined the nature of women's position and conditions.

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the Pacific Gender & Climate Change Toolkit for Practitioners as cited in ACIAR Gender Guidelines for Project Proposals

[http://aciar.gov.au/files/aciar\\_gender\\_guidelines\\_for\\_research\\_proposals\\_2017.pdf](http://aciar.gov.au/files/aciar_gender_guidelines_for_research_proposals_2017.pdf)

## PURPOSE

### VISION

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) looks to a world where poverty has been reduced and the livelihoods of many improved, through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.

(ACIAR CORPORATE PLAN 2017-21)

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) brokers and invests in research partnerships to build knowledge that enables developing countries to progress crucial development objectives:

- improving food security and reducing poverty among smallholder farmers and rural communities;
- managing natural resources and producing food more sustainably, adapting to climate variability and mitigating climate change; and
- enhancing human nutrition and reducing risks to human health.

Women and men play a central role in the farming, food and health, and natural resource management systems of developing countries, but women's contribution is often undervalued or unrecognised.

As a world-leading research for development organisation, ACIAR:

- recognises the central role that women, frequently from poor and marginal communities, play in agricultural systems across the world;
- acknowledges that given gender inequalities in many countries in which ACIAR works, there is a significant gender gap in access to the benefits of agricultural development, including education, extension and financial services;
- understands that while gender inequalities persist agricultural research for development cannot achieve maximum effectiveness.

Accordingly, ACIAR places a high priority on gender equity in project design, implementation and impact assessment to ensure maximum benefits to our partner countries, consistent with the Australian Aid Program's focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

ACIAR is committed to applying principles of gender equity and equality in both the internal corporate and external operational spheres. Guided by this document, ACIAR will employ approaches at multiple levels to empower women in order to create a more inclusive organisation that embraces gender equity as a core principle.

ACIAR's gender equity policy and strategy complement the 10 Year Strategic Vision (2018-2028) to ensure that goals of gender equity, equality and women's empowerment are achieved for the benefit of Australia and our partner countries.

## CONTEXT

ACIAR operates in contexts where the gender equity landscape is changing rapidly. Moreover, ACIAR projects trigger changes in social, economic and political landscapes, which have gendered implications.

In the international environment:

- ACIAR commissions world-leading agricultural research for development in partner countries, requiring a sophisticated understanding of gender and power relations across different cultures.
- The UN's Millennium Development Goals (2000) included the goal (MDG3) to *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*. The Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals also recognises the importance of Gender Equality (SDG5) as a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world ([www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/)).
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women ([www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf)). CEDAW has been ratified by 189 states including Australia.

In Australia:

- The Australian government holds explicit expectations of its agencies in relation to gender equity and leadership (see Attachment 1).
- The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has set a target requiring that at least 80 per cent of all aid investments, regardless of their primary objectives, must effectively address gender issues in their implementation (<http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/investment-priorities/gender-equality-empowering-women-girls/gender-equality/Pages/gender-initiatives.aspx>).
- There is growing awareness of gender equity and the principles of fairness that gender equity demands. National programs such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA: <https://wgea.gov.au>) and Science in Australia Gender Equity initiative (SAGE: [www.sciencegenderequity.org.au](http://www.sciencegenderequity.org.au)) reinforce the importance of gender equity.
- There is increasing evidence that all benefit from organisational cultures that are built on gender equity and diversity (APSC 2016).
- There is a strong and growing evidence base correlating diversity with increased productivity and innovation (McKinsey 2007 and 2016).

## ACIAR GENDER EQUITY POLICY

ACIAR'S Gender Equity Policy takes a long-term, principles-based approach to gender equity that is applicable to the commissioning and management of research, corporate management and outreach and capacity building. This policy will support ACIAR's gender equity goal over the 10 Year Strategic Vision (2018-2028).

Gender equity and women's empowerment will be comprehensively integrated into the research portfolio. Developing an understanding of gender and power relations is integral to the production of relevant, robust research. ACIAR will work with commissioned organisations and partners to influence and effect change in order to ensure that research is undertaken in a manner that advances gender equity and empowers women.

Outreach and capacity building activities will be designed to support gender equity and women's empowerment. This will be achieved by ensuring capacity building programs are accessible and suitable for both men and women, and new programs are designed to specifically ensure equitable access to opportunities. ACIAR's outreach activities will highlight women's empowerment and aim to deliver equitable representation of both men and women.

ACIAR will ensure our corporate management is responsive to the needs of men and women in ACIAR, supporting a respectful and equitable workplace. Human Resources will take the lead in supporting respect and diversity in the organisational culture of ACIAR. Corporate services will ensure equitable access to information for men and women and strive to develop training and tools relevant to all staff.

ACIAR's commitment to gender equity, inclusion and respect will be further demonstrated by efforts to understand and address gendered bias. This approach, consistent with the rigour applied to scientific research, will deliver more comprehensive research for development and a more inclusive, respectful and effective organisational culture. Senior leaders will enact and champion ACIAR's gender equity policy to establish and enact meaningful commitment to the principles of gender equity and the implementation of this policy.

## GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The CEO of ACIAR, supported by ACIAR's Gender Equity Committee and the ACIAR executive, is accountable for the implementation of the Gender Equity Policy and Strategy and for ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor outcomes.

To address gender inequality requires persistence, commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation and throughout ACIAR's globally distributed network. This includes changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation and influencing partner organisations. To this end every member of ACIAR staff should be an equity role model and Country Office staff will be supported to work incrementally with partners to communicate expectations and achieve change.

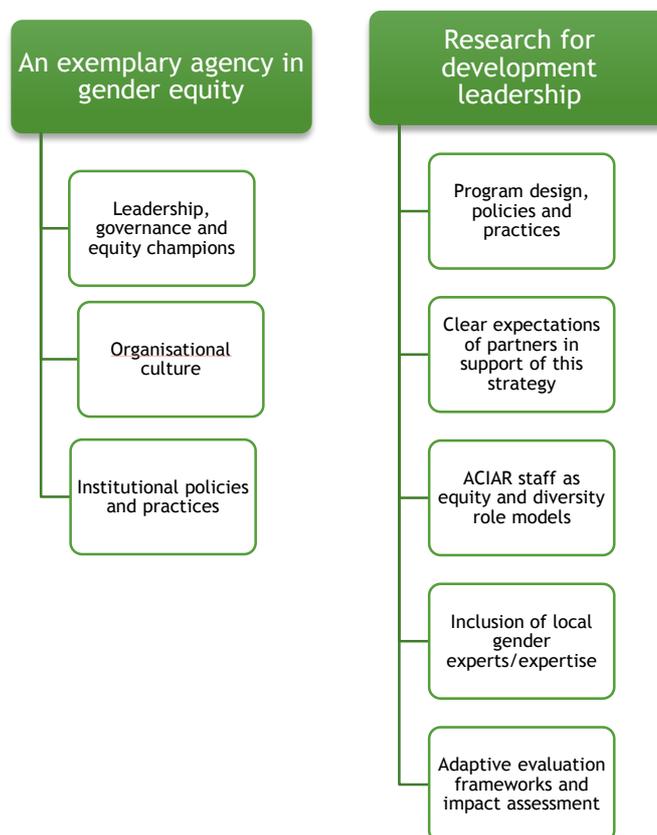
Progress against gender equity indicators in research programs will be monitored annually at a 'Special In-House Review'. This will include tracking progress against the headline gender equity indicator for research programs, that: **"By 2020, 80 per cent of projects reflect principles of gender equity in project design consistent with ACIAR's Research Proposal Gender Guidelines."** A report that tracks annual performance against the range of gender equity indicators will be presented to the Gender Committee.

Performance of internal organisational gender equity outcomes will be tracked through the development of tailored KPIs for all senior managers. Progress against these will be reviewed as part of the annual performance review process. Respect and diversity within the organisational culture at ACIAR will be led by Human Resources. Corporate services will ensure equitable access to information for men and women and strive to develop training and tools relevant to all staff.

Human Resources will monitor the gender composition of the ACIAR workforce (see attachment 2) and provide an annual update to the Gender Equity Committee. Human Resources will also work with the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to advocate for more informative questions that provide greater information on the status of gender equity in ACIAR and comparative agencies as part of the 'State of the Service' report.

## ACIAR GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY

To achieve ACIAR's aim of being internationally recognised as a leader in gender equity and women's empowerment in research for development, ACIAR's organisational profile, culture and professional practices need to reflect the principles and practices of gender equity. This demands an integrated two-pronged strategy:



## ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

The following key elements are critical to achieving organisational change in gender equity and therefore frame the ACIAR Gender Equity Strategy:

- Leadership on and commitment to gender equity by the ACIAR Commission, Policy Advisory Council and management;
- Clarity in relation to career paths and support to create and pursue opportunities for women and men, including opportunities for secondment with other agencies;
- Mentoring and sponsorship to increase gender equity;
- Rethinking the current understanding of 'merit' and application of gender sensitive analysis in competitive processes (such as staff selection, promotion, fellowships, grants) and outcomes for men and women;
- Support for and participation in sustained, structured internal and external networks;
- Gender targets and quotas/dedicated programs;
- Strategies to recognise and address gender bias, including unconscious bias training and development programs.

## AN EXEMPLARY AGENCY IN GENDER EQUITY: A TEN POINT ACTION PLAN

**Staff profile and workforce segregation**

1. Organisational goals are set to achieve a 40:40:20 (40% women 40% men 20% either) target, gender balance across APS classification levels by 2021.
2. Staff profile data, including attraction, appointment, promotion and retention data, will be reviewed as a standing item bi-annually (June and December) in executive meetings. Sex disaggregated data snapshots to include Country Office Staff.
3. Initiatives, including mentoring and sponsorship, are developed to understand and address workforce gender segregation and the resulting gendered pay gap.

**Organisational culture**

4. Training and other opportunities are created for men and women at every level of the organisation to reflect on professional interaction and make personal changes in mindsets, assumptions and behaviours to address gender bias.
5. Active promotion of opportunities for flexible employment for both men and women to encourage sharing of domestic and caring duties, and to foster a culture of well-being.
6. Sex-based harassment and discrimination in the workplace are actively recognised and prevented with the assistance of ACIAR's Workplace Harassment Contact Point network.
7. ACIAR's commitment to gender equity and diversity is reflected in the content, language, and visual imagery of all major reports and relevant communication.

**Research Leadership**

8. Research leaders and teams at commissioned organisations commit to working with research partners and ACIAR Country Office Staff to implement the *Research Proposal Gender Guidelines* (<http://aciarc.gov.au/page/gender-guidelines>).
9. ACIAR CEO commits to the 'panel pledge' (<http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Panel-Pledge.pdf>) to improve gender balance and meaningful participation on panels.
10. ACIAR establishes a Fellowship program to provide opportunities for women to access agricultural education and training, and support women's research leadership in the Indo-Pacific.

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**AN EXEMPLARY AGENCY IN GENDER EQUITY: INDICATORS OF PROGRESS****Staff profile and workforce segregation**

1. Organisational gender goals are set and monitored annually.
2. Sex disaggregated staff profile data is reviewed as a standing item bi-annually (in June and December) in Gender Equity Committee and Executive meetings and evidences a reduction in gendered workforce segregation.
3. Patterns of workforce segregation are reduced, as evidenced by more equitable representation in all APS classification levels.

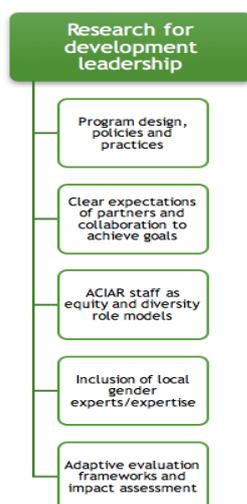
**Organisational culture**

4. Gender bias is not tolerated in the organisation.
5. Opportunities for flexible employment arrangements for both men and women are widely accepted.
6. Sex-based harassment and discrimination in the workplace is eliminated.
7. Gender diversity is evidenced in the content, language, and visual imagery of all major reports and relevant communication.

**Research Leadership**

8. By 2020, a minimum of 80 per cent of research proposals are designed to reflect ACIAR's *Research Proposal Gender Guidelines* (<http://aciar.gov.au/page/gender-guidelines>)
9. The 'panel pledge' (<http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Panel-Pledge.pdf>) is reflected in the panels for all ACIAR sponsored events as well as pro-active involvement in the promotion and inclusion of women speakers in all forums.
10. By 2019 a new fellowship program is established to provide opportunities for women to access agricultural education and training, and existing capacity building programs achieve gender parity by 2020.

## LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: A TEN POINT ACTION PLAN



### Framing of partnerships and projects:

1. ACIAR to clearly articulate the expectation that partner institutions enact gender equity principles. Commissioning organisations will be expected to adhere to their institutional policy/ies on gender equity. In instances where these do not exist the ACIAR policy is to be used as a guide.
2. Projects should reflect principles of gender equity in project design consistent with ACIAR's *Research Proposal Gender Guidelines* (<http://aciarc.gov.au/page/gender-guidelines>).
3. Projects should not be exempt from articulating and contributing to gender equity, whether through the research being undertaken or through the diversity of participants and the potential outcomes.

### Diversity of participants:

4. Where possible, participation of officials at country consultations is gender balanced, and opportunities structured for additional contributions to overcome the dominance of male perspectives.
5. ACIAR commissioned organisations identify the sex of researchers in project proposals with a view to gender parity.
6. ACIAR projects reflect meaningful participation of women consistent with expectations articulated in ACIAR's *Research Proposal Gender Guidelines* (<http://aciarc.gov.au/page/gender-guidelines>).
7. Gender equity is everyone's responsibility. To assist Country Office staff, ACIAR will ensure Heads of Mission and in-country partners are briefed on this policy and strategy.

### Evaluation and Impact Assessment

8. Outcomes from research and capacity building are evaluated to ascertain whether men and women have benefitted and how benefits have been distributed.
9. Partners and researchers demonstrate and deliver on commitments to gender equity and women's empowerment.
10. ACIAR's reputation as an international research for development is explicitly linked to commitments to gender equity.

## LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

### Framing of partnerships and projects:

1. By 2019, commissioned organisations understand the purpose of, and adhere to, gender equity policy commitments. These are progressively refined into strategies that inform project design and implementation. Collaborating organisations are involved in implementation and adhere to the strategy.
2. By 2020, 80 per cent of projects reflect principles of gender equity in project design consistent with ACIAR's *Research Proposal Gender Guidelines* (<http://aciarc.gov.au/page/gender-guidelines>) and this requirement is understood by partners.
3. By 2021, no commissioned research will be exempt from articulating and contributing to gender equity regardless of research focus.

### Diversity of participants:

4. ACIAR country consultations demonstrate increased gender equality in invited participants.
5. By 2021 commissioned research teams achieve gender parity.
6. The meaningful participation of women is a hallmark of ACIAR projects and data is disaggregated to reflect gendered impacts.
7. Gender equity is all team members' responsibility and Country Office staff confirm they are appropriately supported by Canberra-based colleagues to achieve this goal at post.

### Evaluation and Impact Assessment

8. Men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from research and capacity building.
9. Evaluations and Assessments collect information and include analysis on gender equity and women's empowerment.
10. Evidence that ACIAR is internationally identified as a lead organisation delivering gender equity and women's empowerment in agricultural research for development.

## REVIEW

Given the complex international environment in which ACIAR operates, and the range of expectations and capacity of partner organisations and individual researchers, this policy and strategy will be reviewed annually by ACIAR's Gender Equity Committee. The annual review process will evaluate relevance and identify opportunities for adaptive management.

ATTACHMENT 1: ACIAR AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE GENDER EQUITY ENVIRONMENT

Over recent years the Australian government has assigned greater prominence to gender equity. During its G20 presidency in 2014, Australia undertook to reduce the gender gap in workforce participation by 25 per cent by 2025 (APSC 2016:6).

The commitment to gender equity as a government priority is reflected in the Australian Public Service Commission *State of the Service* reports 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017; *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19* (2016); DFAT’s *Women in Leadership Strategy: Promoting equality and dismantling barriers* (November 2015) and *DFAT’s Strategic Workforce Planning Framework 2015-2017*; and, in terms of international engagement, DFAT’s *Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy* (February 2016).

The government consistently links diversity to improved productivity and innovation and this is supported by a growing evidence base.

**The case for change**

A growing body of research shows that:

- a) organisations with the most gender equality outperform those with the least;
- b) increasing the proportion of women in leadership roles is associated with better financial performance; and
- c) gender equality in teams promotes an environment where innovation can flourish.

(APSC 2016:4)

As an Australian Government Agency, the broader Public Service context is relevant in understanding gender equity within ACIAR. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) has identified the primary challenges in gender equity for the Australian Public Service as: **women in leadership and addressing gender segregation in the workforce**. As at 30 June 2017, women made up 59 per cent of the Australian Public Service, but only 43 per cent of the Senior Executive Service (APS Statistical Bulletin 2016-17 [www.apsc.gov.au/about-the-apsc/parliamentary/aps-statistical-bulletin/statisticalbulletin16-17/gender](http://www.apsc.gov.au/about-the-apsc/parliamentary/aps-statistical-bulletin/statisticalbulletin16-17/gender)):

**Distribution of men and women across APS levels as at 30 June 2017**



These key challenges are also reflected in ACIAR's current staff profile, evidencing a concentration of women in APS levels 4-6 but with recent improvements in the representation of women in senior roles (see Attachment 2).

The APSC requires agencies to set targets:

#### Targets

The Government is committed to a gender diversity target of women holding 50 per cent of Australian Government Board positions overall, with at least 40 per cent representation of women and 40 per cent men on individual boards.

Agencies must set **tailored, but ambitious**, gender equality stretch targets across all leadership levels and business areas. Agency heads are to be accountable through their performance agreements for meeting these targets over the life of the Strategy, towards an overarching goal of achieving 50-50 gender balance.

(APSC: 2016:9)

The APS and its agencies are also expected to work towards meeting the criteria of the Workplace Gender Agency (WGEA) 'Employer of Choice for Gender Equality' citation, see [www.wgea.gov.au/lead/employer-choice-gender-equality-0](http://www.wgea.gov.au/lead/employer-choice-gender-equality-0).

A strategic approach to gender equality is a pre-requisite for the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation. Criteria for the citation cover leadership, learning and development, gender remuneration gaps, flexible working and other initiatives to support family responsibilities, employee consultation, preventing sex-based harassment and discrimination, as well as targets for improving gender equality outcomes [www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-EOCGE-Guide-to-citation.pdf](http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-EOCGE-Guide-to-citation.pdf).

In addition, gender equality is also expected to play an explicit part of agencies' innovation agendas. Agencies are expected to review their recruitment, retention and performance management practices to drive gender equality and to build organisational capability to address unconscious bias (APSC 2016: 11).

As a research agency, it is also important that ACIAR draws on the Science in Australia Gender Equity initiative (SAGE: [www.sciencegenderequity.org.au](http://www.sciencegenderequity.org.au)). This provides the agency with the opportunity to benchmark with other government research agencies, in addition to benchmarking with small public sector agencies and the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC).

The above requirements are consistent with Workplace Gender Equity Agency's guide to developing a workplace gender equality policy (2014), the Science in Australia Gender Equity initiative. As such they formally frame the requirements of an ACIAR Gender Equity Strategy, especially a research and internationally focussed agency.

In addition, ACIAR Country Office Staff (referred to by DFAT as LES - locally engaged staff) are expected to contribute to gender equity strategies in their respective overseas posts. The status of these strategies currently varies by post and is not mandatory, however ACIAR will actively engage in these strategies to address barriers to gender equity.

## ATTACHMENT 2: ACIAR STAFF PROFILE

