

# COUNTRY OFFICES – BUILDING NETWORKS ON THE GROUND

**A** key component of ACIAR’s successful partnership approach is having people on the ground in partner countries. While this includes regular visits from ACIAR’s Australian-based staff and project personnel, Country Offices provide a permanent presence.

ACIAR has seven Country Offices in Australian Embassies and High Commissions in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, China and India. Although they were originally established to provide administrative support, the role played by Country Offices has evolved over time.

Prior to the establishment of ACIAR Country Offices, support for ACIAR activities in partner countries was provided through overseas missions, mainly by AusAID (then AIDAB) personnel on an ad hoc basis. As ACIAR’s programs grew in the region a more permanent solution was sought, with the first Country Office set up in Thailand in 1984. Since that time, offices have been opened in nine countries, with those in Malaysia and South Africa closed as programs in those countries have wound down.

The role of the Country Office has changed dramatically since 1984. Today, Country Offices provide advice to ACIAR on in-country program development, including agricultural development priorities, appropriate research, development and extension partners and regional issues. They also assist with monitoring and evaluating specific projects, and with the transitions in programs as they mature and enter new phases of operations.

As an example, the Thailand office is currently managing a reduced ACIAR program

in that country, while also managing the expansion of a program in Cambodia, a small program in Laos and the development of a new program in Burma. Communicating with stakeholders is a key to the success of these programs, including ensuring administrative needs are met. The roles of Country Offices fall across four broad themes:

- communicating ACIAR’s role and activities, including project benefits;
- managing and maintaining productive relationships;
- project support and administration, including to staff and project personnel; and
- representing ACIAR and the Australian Government.

Typically a range of stakeholders exist in-country. Interactions between these and ACIAR are detailed in the table below.

Gathering and disseminating information from and to these stakeholders, building networks to support all the offices’ activities and managing existing relationships are all vital to fulfilling the role expected of Country Offices. Individual offices must also negotiate a range of cultural and political contexts in managing these relationships.

As the roles of Country Offices have evolved over the past two decades, the value and importance of them has been strengthened and recognised – as a presence that builds and maintains the relationships so vital to ACIAR’s partnership mode of operation.



Cecilia Honrado

## PHILIPPINES OFFICE RECOGNISED

**T**he important role played by ACIAR’s Country Offices is also recognised by research institutions and governments in partner countries. An example is the award recognising the Philippines Country Office and Country Manager Ms Cecilia Honrado, given by the Philippines Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), late last year.

Ms Honrado was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from PCARRD. The citation stated: “For her continuous commitment and dynamic leadership as ACIAR Manager – Philippines in the pursuit of agriculture and natural resources R&D. Her staunch support has helped PCARRD pursue R&D in agricultural and natural resources.”

The award was presented in recognition of a decade’s work for ACIAR, acting as a vital link between the Centre and its Philippines partner.

At the same event, held to coincide with PCARRD’s 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of operations, ACIAR was also recognised, receiving the Tanglaw Award for best institution. The award for ACIAR was: “In grateful acknowledgement of its strong commitment and outstanding contribution in strengthening scientific and technological cooperation between PCARRD and ACIAR. Such cooperation undoubtedly has resulted in enhancing the R&D capabilities of participating institutions from both countries in addressing agricultural problems and constraints in production.”

The Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, Ruth Pearce, praised ACIAR and Ms Honrado for the awards: “I am pleased that both ACIAR and its Country Manager Ms Honrado are being recognised by PCARRD. ACIAR’s collaborations with PCARRD and other agencies have made an invaluable contribution to agricultural growth and development in the Philippines. Cecilia embodies the dedication of all those involved in maintaining this outstanding partnership.”

### IN-COUNTRY STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIONS

<b>Country Government</b>	Building awareness of ACIAR’s role, project priorities, development, monitoring and evaluation, delivery of benefits, administrative support
<b>Australian Government</b>	Supporting linkages with other Government organisations, linkages within the Embassy
<b>AusAID</b>	Supporting project and program linkages, information sharing and gathering
<b>Donors – domestic and international NGOs</b>	Building awareness of ACIAR, identify and support linkages
<b>Domestic research institutions</b>	Project development and administrative support, training, logistics, project benefits
<b>Australian research institutions</b>	Project development and administrative support, benefits of projects
<b>Others</b>	Local media stories – TV, print, radio, farmer groups

## NEW PROJECTS (FEB – MAY 2004)

- ADP/2000/072** – Improving resource use efficiency in the coconut industry of North Sulawesi and its national implications
- ADP/2002/047** – Trade liberalisation, agriculture and land degradation in Fiji: implications for sustainable development policies
- AS1/2002/108** – Improved management of small mammals in Tibetan grasslands
- ASEM/2003/010** – Farmer evaluation and multiplication of sweet potato varieties on the North Coast of PNG
- FIS/2001/075** – Sustainable aquaculture development in Pacific Islands region and northern Australia
- FIS/2002/111** – Culture, capture conflicts: sustaining fish production and livelihoods in Indonesian reservoirs
- LWR/2002/113** – Application of innovative irrigated cropping and soil filtration technology for wastewater reuse and treatment in China
- SMCN/2002/033** – Seasonal climate forecasting for better irrigation system management in Lombok
- SMCN/2002/034** – Refinement and adoption of permanent raised bed technology for the irrigated maize-wheat cropping system in Pakistan
- SMCN/2002/093** – Intensifying production of grain and fodder in Central Tibet farming systems

## PROJECT EXTENSIONS AND VARIATIONS (FEB – MAY 2004)

ACIAR projects may be varied to extend the time to completion, to increase the budget available or both. Project variations and extensions are undertaken following a review process of the project, that involves both internal and external review phases.

- ASEM/2000/088** – Redevelopment of a timber industry following extensive land clearing
- AS1/2000/083** – Development of a vaccine for the control of Gumboro in village and small poultry holdings in Indonesia
- AS1/1997/115** – Increasing efficiency and productivity of ruminants in India and Australia by the use of protected nutrient technology
- AS2/2000/103** – Developing an integrated production system for Bali cattle in the eastern islands of Indonesia
- AS2/1998/025** – Performance evaluation and genetic improvement of ruminant animals in the Philippines
- CP/2000/043** – Huanglongbing management for Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia
- CTE/2000/165** – Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program
- FST/1994/019** – Genetic diversity and propagation of mangroves
- LWR/2001/001** – Improving main system water management in China: a demonstration project in the Zhange Irrigation Scheme
- PHT/2000/102** – Selection for improved quality and resistance to Phytophthora pod rot, cocoa pod borer and vascular-streak dieback in cocoa in Indonesia
- SMCN/2000/089** – Permanent beds for irrigated rice-wheat and alternative cropping systems in north-west India and south-east Australia

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### PROCEEDINGS

#### Modelling nutrient management in tropical cropping systems

An end-of-project workshop proceedings, focusing on improving capabilities in crop modelling for tropical cropping systems. The objective of this project was to use data from a range of sites in the tropics to test and improve the capability of the Agricultural Production Systems sIMulator (APSIM) computer model to predict the decomposition of various organic inputs, the dynamics of nitrogen and phosphorus in the soil and crop yields. **Delve R.J. and Probert M.E.** (eds) 2004. ACIAR Proceedings 114, 138pp. Price: \$22 (plus postage and handling).

#### Tropical legumes for sustainable farming systems in southern Africa and Australia

Most of the papers in these proceedings come from a final meeting of an ACIAR project to develop sustainable animal and cropping systems in southern Africa, based on the integration of well-adapted forage plants and appropriate agronomic and animal management practices. The project team has selected forage plants that could be introduced into the degraded grasslands of South Africa and Zimbabwe to improve animal production. **Whitbread A.M. and Pengelly B.C.** (eds) 2004. ACIAR Proceedings 115, 180pp. Price: \$22 (plus postage and handling).

### TECHNICAL REPORTS

#### Cooperatives: issues and trends in developing countries

A number of developing countries have shown interest in cooperatives as a way for smallholders to obtain some market power, especially where old institutions have disappeared or are losing their relevance. This report covers the broad range of issues and trends associated with cooperatives, drawing on relevant experiences of developing and developed countries. **Trewin R.** (ed.) 2003. ACIAR Technical Reports 53, 88pp. Price: \$15 (plus postage and handling).

#### Contract farming in Indonesia: smallholders and agribusiness working together

This report presents the results of a survey-based analysis of contract farming in Lombok and Bali. As developing countries continue on the path of economic liberalisation, there is an urgent need to bring the benefits of new trade and market opportunities to rural areas. Smallholders

often do not have access to capital, marketing information and institutional support. One possible mechanism for improving their livelihoods and providing them with the benefits of economic liberalisation is contract farming. **Patrick I.** 2003. ACIAR Technical Reports 54, 72pp. Price: \$15 (plus postage and handling).

#### Chromolaena in the Asia-Pacific region

Chromolaena (Siam weed) is a serious weed which has spread from its original home in the West Indies to large areas of Africa and Asia. It is now considered a major weed threat to Australia. Chromolaena has many enemies and biological control has long been recognised as a control option. This book contains papers presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on Biological Control and Management of Chromolaena and looks at a number of the control agents which have been tested. **Day M.D. and McFadyen R.E.** (eds) 2004. ACIAR Technical Reports 55, 52pp. Price: \$13 (plus postage and handling).

### WORKING PAPERS

**Mud crab aquaculture in Australia and Southeast Asia** Allan G. and Fielder D. (eds) 2004. ACIAR Working Paper 54, 70pp.

**Agricultural research and poverty alleviation: some international perspectives** Ryan J. 2004. ACIAR Working Paper 56, 32pp.

**A survey of marine trash fish and fish meal as aquaculture feed ingredients in Vietnam** Edwards P., Le Anh Tuan, Allan G. (eds) 2004. ACIAR Working Paper 57, 56pp. All papers available at [www.aciar.gov.au](http://www.aciar.gov.au)

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## POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**A**CIAR's Policy Advisory Council (PAC) held its 24<sup>th</sup> meeting in Canberra from 24-26 March. The meeting was an opportunity for representatives from ACIAR partner countries and Australia to discuss issues relating to agricultural research and their implications on the Centre's operations.

The PAC provides advice to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and ACIAR, on agricultural problems in developing countries and ways to resolve them. This advice includes identifying problems, constraints to solving them, national and regional research priorities and modes of operation to match Australian expertise to these priorities.

The Council met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Alexander Downer, at a dinner on Tuesday evening, 23 March, prior to the official start of proceedings.

A key component of the meeting was discussion and feedback on ACIAR's draft Annual Operational Plan for 2004-05. The perspectives of the PAC members are an important input into the development of the Plan, released in June.

Invited speakers at the meeting included Dr Mary Harwood, executive manager of Biosecurity

Australia, discussing Australia's biosecurity policies, and Dr Ian Naumann, principal research scientist at the Office of the Chief Plant Protection Officer, at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The last two days of the Council meeting involved visits to institutions in and around the Canberra region. On Thursday 25 March Council members met with representatives from CSIRO Land and Water, the Murray Darling Basin Commission, universities and ACT Forests to learn more about the relationships between ACIAR projects and Australia's Water Catchment Challenges. The following day was spent meeting with a range of representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ABARE and the Australian National University discussing Australia's trade policy agenda and its relationship to ACIAR projects.

A presentation was also given by Mr Terry Davis, a reviewer of ACIAR projects involving World Vision, entitled 'Bridging the divide between agricultural R&D and community livelihoods: the World Vision/ACIAR perspective'. ■

## ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN

ACIAR's 2004-05 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) comes into effect on 1 July 2004. The AOP lays out research priorities for all ACIAR partner countries in which ACIAR operates, as well as available funding for project development.

The AOP is built around ACIAR's budget allocation for the 2004-05 financial year. Each year ACIAR receives a number of worthwhile project ideas, which need to be matched to the main priority areas for each country. Research Programs do not always operate in every country. The AOP defines which program areas operate in which country, and the research priorities for the area programs in those countries.

Readers will be able to use this country/program presentation to determine research priorities and available funds, when considering and developing project proposals.

The AOP also sets out internal priorities for Corporate Program areas, as well as key performance indicators for all areas of ACIAR.

A copy of the AOP, together with the priorities for each region, can be found on the ACIAR website at [www.aciar.gov.au](http://www.aciar.gov.au). Hard copies can be obtained by contacting ACIAR directly. ■

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND SOLOMON ISLANDS MANAGER

**M**argaret Newman is ACIAR's new Country Manager for Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Margaret has joined ACIAR from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where she held a number of positions in Australian Embassies and Consulates overseas. She began her career as a teacher before joining DFAT as a communications officer.

Since then, Margaret has worked in a variety of representational, management and consular roles, in embassies in Rangoon, Burma, London, Paris, Belgrade and New Delhi. Other posts have included Charge d' Affaires in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and Deputy Head of Mission and Consul in Beirut, Lebanon.

Margaret has also undertaken short-term missions in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, Islamabad, Pakistan, Budapest and Prague where she was a member of the post opening team. Between postings, she worked in a number of roles within the Corporate Management Division and as desk officer for a number of European and East European countries in the Americas and Europe Division of DFAT in Canberra.

Margaret is looking forward to the opportunities that working with ACIAR has to offer: "ACIAR's mission in Papua New Guinea and the Solomons provides me the opportunity to meet and assist others in a very practical way, while at the same time extending my own knowledge and understanding of these countries and their peoples. It's challenging work but inspiring. There's something very rewarding about believing in what one is trying to achieve". ■



### VIETNAM MANAGER

**M**isha Coleman joins ACIAR from Care International in Vietnam, where she was responsible for project design and implementation, strategic sectoral development and technical advice on a broad range of public and environmental health issues – including the recent Avian influenza epidemic.

Misha has worked and studied in the Mekong Region since 1995 and has published on various socio-environmental issues. Most recently, she worked for three years in Cambodia in the public health sector. Misha has also worked for AusAID in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea and in Canberra, as the Environment Sector Officer on the Philippines Country Desk. She has worked in northern Australia with Aboriginal communities and in several townships in South Africa for the Health Department during apartheid.

Misha first went to Vietnam in 1996: "The economic reforms and associated growth in Vietnam over the past eight years have been truly impressive. Looking ahead, there are significant opportunities and challenges for the Government of Vietnam as it pursues further international agricultural trade expansion. For example, the impending WTO accession will facilitate an expansion in trade opportunities but a challenge will be to ensure that the poorest farmers also benefit.

"With 75 per cent of the population in Vietnam engaged in agriculture, ACIAR has enormous potential to assist the Government of Vietnam to improve agricultural outcomes, maximise agricultural trade opportunities in an environmentally sustainable way, and ultimately to reduce poverty in Vietnam. I am very pleased to be joining ACIAR at such an exciting time in the development of Vietnam". ■

