

Blueprint sets out significant increase in aid program

Australia will significantly increase its overseas aid spending with a strong focus on accelerating economic growth, boosting support for education and health in the region (particularly for women and children), providing incentives for good performance and adopting a more rigorous approach to tackling corruption.

The White Paper *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*, launched by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, on 26 April 2006, maps out how aid funding will double to about \$4 billion a year by 2010.

Over the next 10 years most of Australia's aid will be focused on the Asia-Pacific region – home to the greatest number of the world's poor.

The number of scholarships for Asia-Pacific students will double to 19,000 over the next five years.

The government will establish an Office of Development Effectiveness to monitor aid programs. It will publish an annual review assessing the aid effort.

The government will also fully 'untie' its aid, allowing foreign companies and individuals to bid for contracts, promoting greater competition and value for money. The White Paper's overarching principles include gender equality and partnership.

What will the White Paper mean for ACIAR? It sets out strategies for enhancing engagement in the region through policy coherence and a whole-of-government approach to aid delivery, and also to broadening participation beyond government – all of which will impact on the way ACIAR plans and conducts research and operations. The aid program will boost and diversify ACIAR's research investment.

ACIAR plays a key role in the development research program. Its research will be better integrated into the rural development strategy and form part of the single framework of country development strategies. In line with the paper's strategy to mobilise new links to the region, ACIAR will seek more private sector participation and research programs will incorporate gender considerations and support private sector-led rural and business development initiatives.

ACIAR looks forward to playing its part in the government's integrated and coordinated response to the complex development challenges in our region.

THE AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY*

The Australian Development Gateway (ADG) is a free public website supporting knowledge-sharing for sustainable development.

The site is fully funded by AusAID and aims to support people working in Asia Pacific countries to reduce poverty and promote sustainability. It encourages aid practitioners to contribute knowledge and participate in discussion and enables people working in development to collaborate more effectively by sharing practical knowledge.

The ADG provides:

- ▶ access to quality resources on key development topics;
- ▶ business and employment opportunities;
- ▶ a directory of people and organisations working in development;
- ▶ online discussion forums and regular 'ask the specialist' features; and
- ▶ information on development activities and the people behind them.

The ADG website features nine topic areas that link to more than 1720 resources:

1. agriculture
2. development practice/effectiveness
3. disaster management
4. education
5. microfinance/enterprise development
6. governance
7. health
8. information and communication technology
9. water

To find out more, visit

www.developmentgateway.com.au

* ACIAR is proud to be an agriculture partner of the ADG



The White Paper on Australia's aid is launched by Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer at the National Press Club in April.

For more information on the White Paper *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability* see www.aciar.gov.au