

# Preface

This year's Annual Operational Plan - covering July 07 – June 08 – is the first framed in the context of the Government's White Paper on Australia's overseas aid program. This White Paper was released in April 2006 and seeks to focus the aid program around four themes:

- accelerating economic growth
- fostering functioning and effective states
- investing in people
- promoting regional stability and cooperation

ACIAR is an integral part of the aid program and clearly our work will be governed by the strategic framework set out in the White Paper. The Centre will continue to work closely with AusAID in 2007-08 to ensure that the necessary building blocks are put in place to make this happen.

Two vital AusAID-led elements of the post White Paper framework are the role of joint country development strategies, the first of which for the Philippines was released in May 2007, and the new Office of Development Effectiveness. Both will be central elements to guide ACIAR funded programs and our accountability for the effectiveness of our programs.

As our programs unfold in partnership with countries in the Asia Pacific, it is clear that a number of specific new and heightened challenges are facing us and adding a significant overlay to the program:

- Climate change and variability, and the related energy issues of the agricultural scope for fossil fuel alternatives and carbon farming,
- New pests and diseases, Avian influenza and Ug 99, a variant form of stem rust in wheat, being the most recent examples, and,
- Better water management where availability and its variability are being stressed significantly by climate change and the demands of agricultural intensification.

Add a number of other challenges such as micronutrient deficiency in crops and livestock nutrition, and the over-exploitation of our marine resources and a formidable agenda emerges. In total, the enormous challenges that require concerted action by Australia, partner countries and international organisations like the CGIAR and its Centres.

And it is the quality of ACIAR's partnerships that will help make a real contribution to solving these key complex challenges. This AOP is one necessary step in ensuring the appropriate trust, transparency, accountability and participation which is so essential to quality partnerships.

As with previous Plans, this AOP is the result of detailed consultations with partner countries and Australian organisations, and makes judgments about where Australia's research capabilities can best make an impact. The Plan seeks to set out priorities so that all of us can focus our joint efforts on likely investment opportunities.

No planning document can include every detail of our operations and nor should it. All of us need some scope to respond to the unforeseen but, at its heart, the AOP will be our key program outline for 2007-08.

If you want to know more about any aspect of ACIAR's activities, do not hesitate to contact us. Details are in the Corporate Directory on the inside back cover. Our website — [www.aciar.gov.au](http://www.aciar.gov.au) — is also a key gateway to our operations.

## **ACIAR's Vision**

***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's Mission**

***To achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, for the benefit of developing countries and Australia, through international agricultural research partnerships.***