

Building research capacity

Expenditure in 2002–03	\$2 513 554
Expenditure in 2001–02	\$1 995 000
Expenditure in 2000–01	\$2 062 942
Proportion of total ACIAR expenditure 2002–03	5%

The goal of the training program is to build the research capacity of agricultural research institutions in partner countries by providing discipline-specific and broader training opportunities.

Project-specific training

ACIAR only supports training that relates directly to our active, recently completed and advanced pipeline projects. The training program focuses on the formal training provided through fellowships and courses targeting specific issues. Training opportunities arising as a component of ACIAR-funded projects are not included in this. The majority of training provided by ACIAR takes place within individual research projects.

Each ACIAR project is designed to include capacity-building, through formal and informal training to enable project personnel from partner countries to engage in the full range of activities. Formal courses may be built into the project, for example to provide training in a particular research methodology or use of new equipment, and often to develop essential skills in computing or scientific communication. This can include 'on-the job' training in Australia in specialised techniques for developing country project scientists or sponsorship of these scientists to attend short training courses in such techniques. Informal training varies according to the type of project, the ability of the project team and opportunities that arise.

Achievements

Training managed and funded by the ACIAR training program falls into four categories, the first representing the main expenditure:

- postgraduate fellowships (John Allwright Fellowship Scheme);
- research management training (John Dillon Memorial Fellowship);
- short-term cross-discipline training courses for ACIAR project staff;
- training courses provided through the Crawford Fund for International Agricultural Research for staff from ACIAR-funded projects.

Capacity-building is important for all of our developing country partners, but especially so for ACIAR's newer, poorer partner countries. There is a particular emphasis on providing postgraduate and short-course training for ACIAR project scientists from PNG, the Pacific, eastern Indonesia, East Timor, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Burma.

Postgraduate fellowships

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to developing country project



Sharon Harvey works with John Skerritt in managing our training program

scientists who are or have worked on an active ACIAR project, to undertake Masters or PhD training at Australian universities. Studies focus on the theme of the project in which the awardee is engaged, but do not directly form part of the project. In 2003–04 fellowships will be available to scientists from Papua New Guinea, the Pacific, East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of South Africa.

In 2002–03, \$1.46 million was expended on the John Allwright Fellowship Scheme with 50 active fellowships, representing 15 countries. Ten fellows completed their studies during the year, and 16 candidates, from Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, commenced at nine institutions in Australia, including two Papua New Guinea fellows studying externally for a Graduate Diploma in Science through the University of Queensland. ACIAR aims to maintain about 45 active students. Fellows now have the option of undertaking a significant part of the fieldwork for their thesis in their home country. Each year a group of Fellows spend a week visiting ACIAR headquarters, where they receive training in science communication, writing research papers and a range of other activities.

Returnee small project awards

ACIAR provides grants of up to \$10 000 for John Allwright Fellows who, after completion of their postgraduate studies, have returned to relevant employment in their home country. The follow-on funding scheme provides for an activity which continues, or is related to, the research done within an ACIAR project associated with postgraduate work. These funding grants for former John Allwright Fellows are primarily aimed at developing small-scale research projects in the returnee’s institution, which may catalyse longer-term support. In 2002–03 four small projects totalling \$36 696 were awarded.

John Dillon Memorial Fellowship

The John Dillon Memorial Fellowship provides a career development activity for a small number of outstanding partner country agricultural scientists or agricultural economists actively involved with ACIAR projects. Its aim is to develop the leadership skills of Fellows in the areas of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies, through exposure to Australian best-practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy making. Programs are tailored to meet the needs of individual Fellows.

The four inaugural John Dillon Fellows (from Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia) visited in February–March 2003 for approximately six weeks each. A highlight of the visit was a meeting with Minister Downer at Parliament House. Each Fellow had the opportunity for a brief discussion about their training with the Minister, who presented them with a plaque.



Minister Downer presenting awards to the four inaugural John Dillon Fellows. In order from top:

- Rina Oktaviani, Indonesia*
- Nalish Sam, PNG*
- Suon Sothoeun, Cambodia*
- Lastus Kuniata, PNG*



Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development

ACIAR provides assignments for Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYADs), an AusAID-funded scheme where young Australians spend a period of between three and 12 months assisting on a development activity in a partner country. During 2002–03 ACIAR had 10 Youth Ambassadors working on projects in developing countries. One has successfully completed his work in Vietnam on pesticide and mycotoxin analysis and control, while two in Cambodia, one in Vietnam and another in Laos have finished working on assignments on rodent management projects. The sixth was carrying out socioeconomic surveys with an ACIAR project on improved village cattle growth and reproduction in Lombok, Indonesia.

A further four Youth Ambassadors are currently working in: the Philippines supporting a Landcare project as a Waterwatch co-coordinator; China, building capacity in survey and evaluation methodology; Laos, sharing knowledge on plant quarantine work; and Vietnam, on a measurement survey of stands of indigenous trees growing in the country's north. Four more ACIAR projects were approved as suitable, with Youth Ambassadors assigned to them to begin in the new financial year. However, of these the Indonesia assignments are currently on hold for security reasons.

ATSE Crawford Fund fellowships, training courses and master classes

In 2002–03, total funding through ACIAR was \$799 380, including management of an Australian Government allocation of \$650 000, as well as \$149 380 funding from ACIAR for joint training activities. The ATSE Crawford Fund also attracted contributions from State Governments and the private sector.

In 2002–03 the Crawford Fund conducted short-term training activities associated with ACIAR projects, including a Master Class in Research Management held in Sydney. Participants on the course included ACIAR project personnel from Vietnam, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Another seven training courses and related capacity-enhancing activities were associated with ACIAR projects:

- Interpreting soil chemical analyses for the management of upland soils workshop in Thailand (Queensland Department of Natural Resources & Mines);
- Population breeding methodology and plant improvement for India, Nepal and China (University of Western Australia);
- National Workshop on the laboratory diagnosis of tick-borne diseases for Philippines (Queensland Department of Primary Industries);
- Improving R&D outcomes in rural and regional agricultural systems for Philippines (Queensland Department of Primary Industries);
- Presence and importance of phytophthora in Southeast Asia (Queensland Department of Primary Industries);

- Workshop on writing scientific papers in English in western China (The University of Adelaide); and
- Pond fertilisation and polyculture techniques for highland areas in Vietnam (South Australian Research and Development Institute).

These classes and workshops also helped ensure ACIAR research results were more widely applied in developing countries, since in some cases they gave ACIAR project leaders the opportunity to instruct scientists from countries other than those where their projects are situated.

The Crawford Fund also sponsors short-term training fellowships. In 2002–03 the Fund sponsored ten fellowships to enable members of ACIAR project teams to undertake training activities in Australia of up to three months.

Cross-program training

ACIAR conducts cross-program training courses on the priority topics of:

- research management and scientific priority-setting;
- intellectual property management in agriculture;
- research methodology, including experimental design and data analysis;
- research proposal writing and scientific report and paper writing in English;
- economics for biophysical agricultural scientists;
- agricultural extension principles; and
- research impact assessment.

The following cross-program training courses were undertaken in 2002/03:

- Scientific writing in English (Western China) was held in Lanzhou, China during November 2002 for ACIAR project scientists from Gansu and neighbouring provinces.
- Research problem identification and proposal writing (Cambodia) was held in January 2003 to assist participants in developing and submitting proposals.
- On-line training in statistical methods (Indonesia), an internet-based data analysis/statistics course provided by the University of Canberra, commenced in February 2003 with six ACIAR project personnel from Lombok involved. Successful participants are eligible for a Graduate Certificate in Envirostats. This is an experiment for ACIAR in the delivery of project-related training on-line, and its effectiveness will be closely monitored before deciding if further on-line training is provided.
- Scientific writing and editing in English (Laos) was provided for a small group of four editors in Laos working on the Lao Journal of Agriculture and Forestry during February 2003 with follow-up personal coaching by email or fax available for the remainder of 2003.
- Genotype x Environment Analysis (India and Nepal) for data management and statistical analysis was conducted in Hyderabad and Kanpur, India during March and April 2003 with 15 students in each



Sugarcane research - sampling for disease analysis

course. An abridged version was held in Kathmandu, Nepal during March with 24 people attending.

- Research Management (Vietnam) for Vietnamese researchers and officials responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating research programs was held in Hanoi in March 2003. Seventeen people attended this course which was based on the Crawford Fund Master Classes in Research Management in Agriculture.
- R&D Evaluation and impact assessment – Evaluation Training for Agricultural Research Projects (Vietnam and Philippines) for ACIAR project scientists was conducted during March and April 2003. The three, three-day training courses focused on frameworks and processes for developing and implementing evaluation plans for research projects.
- Research Management (Pacific), a six-day training workshop on research management, based on the Crawford Fund Master Classes in Research Management in Agriculture, was conducted for Pacific scientists in June 2003 in Fiji with 18 people attending.



Dick Drew and participant on a training course in Fiji for fruit fly research