

Building research capacity

AOP budgeted expenditure in 2007–08	\$4,570,000
Actual expenditure in 2007–08	\$6,375,429
Expenditure in 2006–07	\$4,132,093
Expenditure in 2005–06	\$2,908,586
Proportion of total ACIAR expenditure 2007–08	9.7%

Ms Sharon Harvey,
Education and Training Officer



Key performance indicators	Performance 2007–08
New alliance/s for delivery of cross-program and other training developed for Pacific island countries	University of the South Pacific–ACIAR Postgraduate Scholarships Program designed during 2007 and commenced in February 2008 with eight scholarships awarded in 2007–08. Postgraduate scholarships are competitively awarded to students who carry out R&D projects associated with current ACIAR projects.
Continued high quality of applicants for in-depth research management training in Australia (John Dillon Fellows), such that over 30 applications are received and at least six Fellowships are awarded	56 applications were received and 10 Fellowships were awarded.
Size of postgraduate (John Allwright Fellowship) program increased by a further 20 per cent	In 2006–07 there were 96 active Fellowships during the year. In 2007–08 the scheme increased to 141 active during the year—an increase of 47 per cent.

Building capacity of agricultural research institutes in partner countries by providing both discipline-specific and some broader training opportunities is one of ACIAR's key priorities. With co-funding from AusAID, ACIAR significantly increased the number of postgraduate awards (John Allwright fellowships) in both 2006–07 and 2007–08. The training program focuses on specialised training activities provided through postgraduate and research management fellowships and a small number of short courses that target specific cross-cutting issues.

Project-specific training

The priority of the training program is the enhancement of the research capabilities of partner country institutions through targeting individuals involved in ACIAR projects. Much of this is done in individual projects managed by individual research programs, through on-the-job training, where either developing-country scientists visit Australia or Australian specialists visit partner countries to present a training program on a specific technical subject. Examples of these types of discipline-specific training courses include training in economic modelling or training in propagation of disease-free citrus plants.

The activities managed by the ACIAR training program include the following, with the first representing the largest main expenditure:

- Postgraduate training. This mainly comprises John Allwright Fellowships for postgraduate study in Australia associated with specific ACIAR projects and a smaller number of awards for in-country postgraduate diploma and masters degree training associated with ACIAR projects in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific islands;
- Support for small in-country research projects for Fellowship returnees;
- Research management training (John Dillon Memorial Fellowships);
- Short-term 'cross-program' training courses.

For training activities directed at Indonesia, the training program works closely with institutional development advisors based in Bogor, who form part of the ACIAR-managed component of the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative (SADI). In 2007–08, several training programs involved participants from both the SADI and main ACIAR programs.

Postgraduate fellowships

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to partner-country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported collaborative research projects to undertake postgraduate training, usually at the Masters or Doctoral level, at Australian universities. Studies focus on areas that add value to the topic or theme of the ACIAR project in which the awardee is engaged, but do not directly form part of the project. Fellows are able to spend up to 50 per cent of their research project period on fieldwork in their home country. This enables the fellows to ensure that their postgraduate research work is relevant to the project and their home country's needs, and it also allows them to maintain their professional and personal networks. With the increased recognition by the Australian aid program of the capacity-building benefits provided to partner countries and the impact on Australia-regional relationships through support of postgraduate training in Australia, the size of the fellowship scheme has increased significantly over recent years. From only 15 scholars in 1999–2000, it increased to 50 in 2003–04 and to 141 in 2007–08. Although



Recipients of the John Allwright Fellowships, 2008 with Ms Sharon Harvey, ACIAR Education and Training Officer

eligibility is restricted to those involved in ACIAR projects, competition for awards remains highly competitive. A follow-up survey of Fellows in 2003–04 demonstrated significant institutional and individual benefits from the program. Well over 90 per cent of awardees successfully completed their studies and many former awardees now occupy prominent positions in their countries. A second follow-up survey is underway in mid-2008 with the results to be published in late 2008.

During 2007–08 \$5.3 million (including co-investment from AusAID) was expended on the John Allwright Fellowship Scheme. Seven fellows successfully completed their studies and 61 new fellows from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Vietnam commenced at sixteen universities in Australia. All Fellows are required to attend a five-day meeting in Canberra to undertake training in science communication, writing research papers while also having the opportunity for networking. The 2007 meeting was held from 15–19 October and 32 Fellows participated. Fellows became better acquainted with ACIAR, obtained a better understanding of how their project fits into the broader collaborative program in their country, and met other ACIAR postgraduate students.

Following approaches from Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries, limited support has been provided for a limited number of in-country postgraduate diploma and Masters degree awards linked to ACIAR projects. This has resulted in a larger body of trained agricultural, forestry and fisheries researchers becoming available to these countries in an environment where taking a larger cohort of researchers out of the system for several years would potentially damage capacity within small national agricultural research systems. It builds linkages between government and universities in the region and helps develop the research capacity of the universities. The scheme

commenced in 2005 with the University of Technology, Lae, Papua New Guinea, and 19 students have completed postgraduate studies with two postgraduate diploma awardees subsequently receiving John Allwright Fellowships. The University of the South Pacific–ACIAR Postgraduate Scholarships Program commenced in February 2008 with eight scholarships awarded.

Returnee small project awards

Small grants of up to \$10,000 are available for successful John Allwright Fellows, who have completed postgraduate studies and 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 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 2007–08 three small projects, totalling \$27,796 were awarded with a further four in the pipeline. Since 2000, a total of 43 of these awards have been made.

John Dillon Memorial Fellowship

John Dillon Fellowships provide a career development opportunity in Australia for outstanding mid-career agricultural scientists and economists from ACIAR partner countries. The aim is to develop the leadership skills of Fellows in the area of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies through exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policymaking. ACIAR has awarded 36 Fellowships since the program's inception in 2002. A group of 10 Fellows (from Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Vanuatu) visited Australia for a five week period in March–April 2008. The Hon Bob McMullan MP, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, met with them at Parliament House and presented each Fellow with a plaque.



Recipients of the John Dillon Fellowship Awards, 2008 with the Hon Bob McMullan, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance and Dr John Skerritt, ACIAR Deputy CEO R&D

John Allwright and John Dillon Alumni Association

ACIAR maintains linkages with all former students that were supported through the John Allwright Fellowship program and former research management trainees (John Dillon Fellows) through an Alumni Association. Alumni keep involved with ACIAR in several ways. Several former Fellows now lead or play key roles in ACIAR projects and ACIAR partner organisations. Others assist in the delivery of ACIAR-sponsored training courses and impact assessment activities in partner countries. Alumni are also invited to ACIAR in-country functions (including country consultations) and receive an electronic newsletter three times annually, along with ACIAR corporate documents and technical publications.

Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development

Since 2000 ACIAR has provided successful assignments for over 40 Youth Ambassadors in the AusAID-funded Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development scheme where young Australians spend from 3 to 12 months assisting on a development activity in a partner country. During 2007–08 three Youth Ambassadors were associated with ACIAR projects, including an animal

health project in Indonesia, horticultural pest management in Cambodia, and on livestock production systems in western China.

ATSE Crawford Fund fellowships, training courses and master classes

In 2007–08, total funding to the Crawford Fund included provision of an Australian Government allocation (through ACIAR) of \$700,000, as well as \$178,595 from ACIAR for joint training activities. The Crawford Fund also attracted contributions from State Governments and the private sector. In 2007–08 the Crawford Fund conducted several short-term training activities associated with ACIAR projects, including a Master Class in histopathology of finfish diseases. Other training courses associated with ACIAR projects included:

- using a soil constraints and management package to guide the sustainable management of upland soils—July 2007 (Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water);
- a workshop to determine Surra control in the future—September 2007 (Murdoch University);
- process-orientated workshop on conversion and primary processing on coconut wood—September 2007 (Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland);
- enhancing the extension of conservation agriculture techniques in Asia and the Pacific—September 2007 (University of Queensland);
- using the soil constraints and management package to produce risk maps of constraints of upland soils to sustainable production—September 2007 (Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland);
- grain storage management using computer-assisted learning techniques—November 2007 (University of New South Wales);

- implementation of on-farm demonstrations of improved practices for upland crops—February 2008 (New South Wales Department of Primary Industries);
- livestock management and extension training—April 2008 (Charles Sturt University);
- measuring water quantity and quality—June 2008 (CSIRO Land and Water).
- Agricultural extension for researchers, including participatory action research
- Research evaluation and monitoring.

In 2007–08 the following courses were provided:

These activities also helped ensure that ACIAR research results were more widely applied in developing countries since, in some cases, they enable the participation of scientists from countries other than those where the ACIAR projects are based. The Crawford Fund also supported short technical training placements for developing-country scientists in Australia. In 2007–08, 10 placements were sponsored for members of ACIAR project teams.

Cross-program training

Short-term ‘cross-program’ training activities in partner countries for staff associated with active ACIAR projects are also provided. In consultation with its partners, ACIAR has developed training strategies based around particular themes. Courses fall into two categories: (1) training for groups of about 20 (usually from only one partner country) delivered in the relevant partner country; and (2) specialised training for a smaller (usually more senior) group of researchers and research managers from different countries. Based on advice received from partner countries, ACIAR has given priority to the following areas:

- Research management and priority-setting
- Research methodology, including experimental design and data analysis
- Commercialisation of research results
- Research communication and scientific writing in English
- Economics and social science for biophysical agricultural scientists
- *Social and Community Dimensions of ACIAR projects (Advanced course), Indonesia* This course was held in July 2007 in Den Pasar, Indonesia. Its aim was to strengthen the understanding and capacity of participants to critically analyse, design and implement strategies to enhance the social and community dimensions of their ACIAR projects. The workshop was completed by 18 people comprising 13 people from government agencies and research institutes and five from universities. Trainees identified strategies for addressing the social and community challenges identified in their projects, with most strategies focused on building the social capital among project stakeholders, and increasing the commitment of stakeholders.
- *Financial and economic research methods for natural resource managers, the Philippines* The course conducted by the University of Queensland, took place in Manila, the Philippines during September 2007. The group included 23 participants from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. This course aimed to provide managers with an understanding of financial and economic research tools available for understanding the socio-economic factors that contribute to management of natural resources.
- *Writing scientific papers in English, Vietnam* A training course on scientific communication delivered by the University of Western Sydney took place in two-session workshops and was attended by 18 Vietnamese scientists during September and October 2007. The course aimed at having each participant complete a substantive document ready for publication in an international journal on completion of the course.

- *Research and Development Project Management and Commercialisation, Indonesia* In November 2007, 20 Indonesian project scientists attended a five-day training course in Jakarta on defining research projects and deliverables. The course, conducted by the University of Melbourne, included topics on working effectively with research project teams; effective collaborative research skills; maintaining research projects commercialisation potential and pathways to commercialisation.
- *Biotechnology policy development and analysis and Environmental Risk Assessment of GMOs, Thailand* The Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand, conducted training courses with separate streams on policy and biosafety in December 2007. The courses were attended by nine Vietnamese scientists and policymakers.
- *Writing Skills Training, Laos* Fifteen Lao scientists, involved in either the ACIAR-funded Lao Agricultural Research Fund mini-projects scheme or in regular ACIAR projects took part in a writing skills training program in January 2008 at the National Livestock Research Centre, Namxuang.
- *Research Priority Setting, Planning and Activity Management, Indonesia* A training workshop for directors, program managers and senior staff of Assessment Institutes for Agricultural Technology involved in the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative and other ACIAR projects was held in Bogor in January 2008.
- *Delivering Quality Extension Services, Thailand* A total of 16 Indonesian researchers and extensionists associated with ACIAR-SADI projects took part in a separate two week training courses delivered by the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand in November 2007 and April–May 2008.
- *Rural Agribusiness Development and Management, Thailand* A total of 19 Indonesian researchers and extensionists

associated with ACIAR-SADI projects took part in separate two-week training courses delivered by the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2007 and April–May 2008.

- *Leadership Course for Asian Women in Agriculture R&D and Extension, the Philippines* Six mid-career research and extension professionals involved in ACIAR projects in China, India, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea took part in this course run by the International Rice Research Institute in February 2008.
- *Experimental design, data analysis and interpretation, PNG, Laos and Indonesia* Three courses on data management and analysis have been conducted by the University of Queensland with 22 ACIAR project scientists attending each course. The first course was held in Port Moresby, PNG, in November 2007; the second course was held in Vientiane, Laos, in June 2008; and the third course, attended by scientists involved in ACIAR-SADI and forestry projects, was held in Makassar, Indonesia, in June 2008.

Other training courses provided under the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative included separate courses in English language, Information technology, Communicating science and Human resource management.



Dr Ismail Cakmak, Sabanci University, Turkey, recipient of Derek Tribe Award with ACIAR Commissioner the Hon. Neil Andrew