

Building capacity: training and education

Program management

A committee of senior staff, under the chairmanship of ACIAR's Deputy Chief Executive Officer (R&D Programs), provides guidance on training priorities and awards. Mrs Sharon Harvey is the contact point for John Allwright (postgraduate) and John Dillon (research management) fellowships, and Ms Narelle McLaughlin is responsible for cross-program training.

Funding	
2007–08 actual	\$6.38m
2008–09 allocation	\$5.38m
2009–10 estimate	\$6.58m

Key performance indicators

- at least 80% of ACIAR-managed postgraduate students studying in Australia successfully completed their awards within the originally-planned time frame
- at least 75% of postgraduate students in the ACIAR–PNG University of Technology and ACIAR–University of the South Pacific programs successfully completed fieldwork assignments related to their studies
- targeted research management training programs designed and carried out in Australia for at least eight John Dillon fellowship awardees.

Position and priorities

Building capacity of agricultural research institutes in partner countries is one of ACIAR's key priorities. The main aim of the program is enhancement of the research capabilities of institutions and individuals involved in ACIAR projects. Much of this is done in conjunction with individual projects through 'on-the-job' training, where either developing-country scientists visit Australia or Australian specialists visit partner countries to present a training program.

ACIAR also offers several specialised training activities: John Allwright Fellowships, small grants for fellowship returnees, John Dillon Memorial Fellowships for research management, and limited short-term cross-program training courses. The short-term courses are primarily targeted to scientists in Lao PDR and Cambodia (in conjunction with the Lao and Cambodian Agricultural Research Fund) and in eastern Indonesia (in conjunction with the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative), although a limited number of other courses are organised and/or supported.

Postgraduate training

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 PhD level, at Australian universities. Studies focus on areas related 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% of their project period on fieldwork in their home country. With increased recognition by the Australian aid program of the importance of capacity building to partner

countries, and its impact on regional relationships, ACIAR will continue to support postgraduate training, maintaining at least 110 scholars in the fellowship program in 2009–10.

In 2009–10 those eligible to apply for John Allwright Fellowships are ACIAR project staff who are citizens of Papua New Guinea, selected Pacific island countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu), Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, western China and the Republic of South Africa.

During 2009–10 ACIAR will provide up to 20 new awards. ACIAR also supports a limited number of in-country postgraduate diploma and Masters degree awards linked to ACIAR projects and priority areas in Papua New Guinea (program commenced in 2005) and in South Pacific countries (commenced in 2008).

Small grants are also available for John Allwright Fellows after they complete postgraduate studies and return to relevant employment in their home countries. The follow-on funding scheme provides grants of up to \$10,000 for an activity that continues, or is related to, the ACIAR research project and the fellow's associated postgraduate work. The funding is primarily for developing small-scale research projects in the returnee's institution, with the intention of catalysing longer term support and ongoing international collaboration. Since 2000 more than 40 returnee grants have been awarded.

Research management training

John Dillon Fellowships provide career development opportunities 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 areas 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 50 fellowships since the program's inception in 2002, with nine fellows taking part in the program in 2009.

John Allwright and John Dillon fellows' alumni association

ACIAR maintains links with John Allwright and John Dillon Fellows after they return to their home countries through an Alumni Association. Alumni continue their interaction with ACIAR in various ways, including leadership roles in ACIAR projects and delivery and tutor roles in in-country training courses. Alumni are also invited to in-country functions, including country consultations, training activities and impact assessment meetings. They receive an electronic newsletter three times annually, along with ACIAR corporate documents, *Partners in Research for Development* magazine and technical publications.

Cross-program training

A limited number of short-term 'cross-program' training activities in partner countries, or occasionally Australia, for staff associated with active ACIAR projects are also provided. The short-term courses are primarily targeted to scientists in Lao PDR, Cambodia and eastern Indonesia with a limited number of other courses organised and/or supported.

Most activities are directly managed by ACIAR, but some are managed by the ATSE Crawford Fund (<www.crawfordfund.org>). The Crawford Fund also supports short technical training placements for developing-country scientists in Australia.

ACIAR's cross-program training courses are presented by both public and private-sector providers. ACIAR welcomes proposals for training courses from both Australian and developing-country partners. Trainees in cross-program courses must be nationals of the partner countries in which the ACIAR projects are based.

Based on advice from senior officials in partner countries, ACIAR will give priority to the following areas for cross-program training courses:

- 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
- agricultural extension for researchers, including participatory action research
- research evaluation and monitoring.