

Communicating research results

Program management

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Governance and Communications Program

Funding	
2007–08 actual	\$0.63m
2008–09 estimate	\$0.72m
2009–10 budget	\$0.72m

Key performance indicators (2009–10)

- information on program and project achievements and impacts is widely available in print and web-based media
- evidence is available of continuing demand for and appreciation of ACIAR's scientific and corporate publications
- targeted stakeholder groups are satisfied that their information needs are being effectively met
- ACIAR's use of information and communication methods and technologies for disseminating agricultural research information for development is consistent with current best practice.

Position

The *Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982* commits ACIAR to communicating the results and impacts of the research it funds. Responsibility for delivering on this commitment is held by the Governance and Communications Program, which works to communicate these results to a wide range of stakeholders through the most appropriate mediums and channels. Other responsibilities include the provision of secretariat support to the ACIAR Commission and Policy Advisory Council, government relations and reporting, and information management.

The program supports extension to, and adoption of, project outcomes by next-user groups through a number of mechanisms including targeted media campaigns, and print and electronic publishing. This includes production of a wide range of practical 'how to' guides, and reference and technical material in both print and electronic form (depending on end-user needs).

Research outcomes are disseminated to end-user groups through a variety of channels including through *Partners in Research for Development* magazine, training programs, online publication repositories and the website. ACIAR's scientific publications series presents the outcomes of projects as monographs, proceedings and technical reports series. Other publications that report research outcomes or impacts include country profiles, fact sheets, brochures, training manuals, impact assessment reports, adoption studies, and project final reports.

A suite of corporate publications complements dissemination of research outcomes. *Partners in Research for Development* magazine is the flagship corporate publication, communicating the benefits of ACIAR's research to a wide range of audiences, and conveying the partnership mode of operation, through an 'on-the-ground' perspective. Other corporate publications include the annual operational plans, corporate plans and annual reports. All ACIAR publications are available on the ACIAR website (<www.aciar.gov.au>).

The ACIAR website operates as a primary source for individuals and organisations wanting to find and access information about ACIAR and its work. The website provides comprehensive and accessible information about ACIAR's programs and projects, including country strategies and priorities, project summaries, progress reports, final reports, and impact assessments, and other evaluation studies. Research outcomes are published in the form of free downloadable electronic publications and an online shopping facility for purchase in hardcopy. Hardcopy publications are available free of charge to developing-country partners.

The program conducts public awareness activities promoting agricultural research as part of Australia's aid program. It also provides support to program managers, project leaders, project partners, and the seven ACIAR country offices in key partner countries, including advice on strategic communications and communication tools, products and practitioners.

Indicative priorities

- Enhance dissemination and adoption of results of ACIAR-funded work through a number of tools and channels, including publishing information (12–16 new titles) on outcomes and impacts of ACIAR-funded projects in a variety of formats
- Identify and implement the most appropriate method of communicating research results on a case-by-case basis

- Implement a website strategy that supports and encourages project and stakeholder collaboration and interaction. Continue to investigate and deliver appropriate technology options to enhance accessibility, search functionality and design improvements
- Publish *Partners in Research for Development* magazine three times per year to disseminate information about projects and increase awareness of ACIAR's contributions to regional development, with special emphasis on the people involved
- Monitor issues and stakeholder feedback to inform communication strategies and activities
- Participate in targeted public awareness initiatives such as the annual Crawford Fund seminar, publication and project launches, targeted advertising and sponsorship, and media releases
- Work with country offices on development of communication strategies and tools for partner countries, for example bilingual publications and newsletters, media monitoring, and liaison and training.