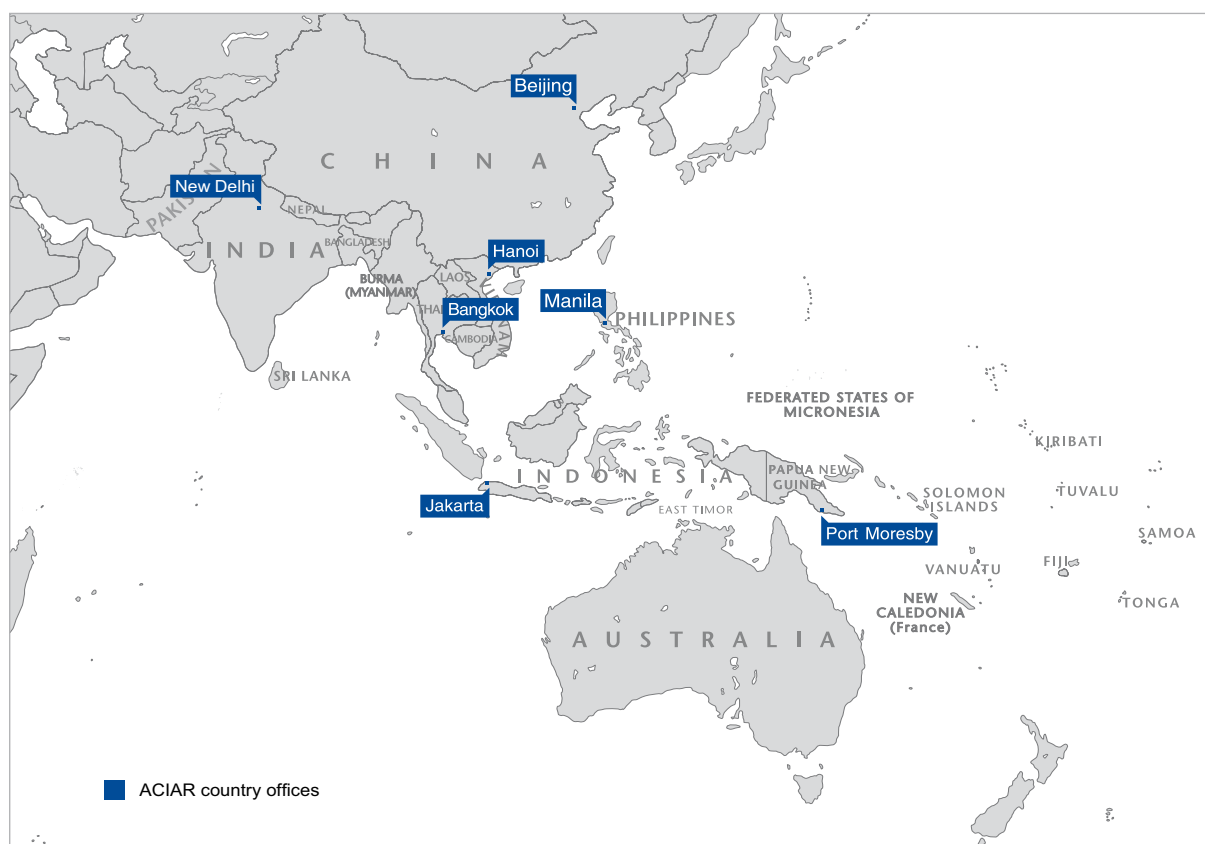


Research and development programs

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The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) allocates research and development funding to both bilateral and multilateral programs and projects. The bilateral program comprises all projects involving Australian and developing-country research institutions, where an Australian organisation is commissioned to lead the project. Multilateral projects are led by International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs).

The bilateral program operates by region and country within the regions of Papua New Guinea and the Pacific island countries, South-East Asia, North Asia, South Asia, and Africa. This document is presented along these regional and country lines. Priorities for research and development (R&D) cooperation are included for each country, and project proposals need to address these priorities. ACIAR's priorities for its program with individual partner countries are developed through processes of formal and informal consultations.



ACIAR – map of country offices

Gender and ACIAR's programs

ACIAR's agricultural 'research for development' program includes a focus on gender, assessing the roles of men and women in agricultural production and marketing. It aims to improve productivity through engaging men and women equally in an approach that achieves sustainable improvements in the lives and wellbeing of smallholder farmers.

Cultural factors in many developing country societies, such as women being afforded less status and having poor access to land ownership, result in women being the majority of smallholder farmers and a major source of on-farm labour. However, they have limited access to the resources and opportunities they need to maximise and profit from their contributions. The combined impact of these factors minimises opportunities created by agricultural productivity gains such as the sale of increased amounts of farm produce to markets, the use of increased family income for education and health and, ultimately, reductions in poverty and hunger and contributions to broad-based economic growth.

An enhanced understanding of the complexities of gender roles in agricultural production and marketing is helping ACIAR refine project goals, and project and program designs. For example, a recently concluded project found that training of women who have sole responsibility for farm management led to yield increases of 15–20% in the Philippines and a major reduction of farm input costs in Vietnam, resulting in marketable surpluses and increased income. This work also reiterated the need to engage whole families. These findings have informed a number of other ACIAR projects designed to train either women running farms, or whole families where both genders are involved in farming, in new management approaches. Examples include:

- Landcare in the Philippines, where women take a lead role in building communities of practice (e.g. introducing conservation practices on sloping lands) and developing group marketing strategies
- participatory processes that allow small farming families to change to better water harvesting and cropping systems in watersheds of the eastern Indian plateau
- education of women farmers in Lao PDR in the use of legumes as feed for fattening village pigs (a major source of household income), allowing quicker grow-out and more animals to be kept and sold.

In 2008, ACIAR commissioned an external consultancy to assist in gender considerations in the design and execution of its eastern Indonesian programs. Lessons learnt are being implemented in Indonesia and used more broadly across the ACIAR program in 2009–10.

Understanding the needs and roles of all contributors to and beneficiaries of farm productivity is essential to designing and implementing projects that deliver productivity benefits, particularly where women are the main workers or the



Mrs Endah Soetanti at the Brackish Water Aquaculture Development Centre in Indonesia training in laboratory techniques to test for shrimp and fish viral diseases

head of the farm. The design processes must also reflect the implications of labour and time on families, especially where new management techniques are being introduced.

ACIAR recognises that gender is integral to all the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that a focus on gender in smallholder agriculture is an important part of achieving project outcomes that alleviate poverty, create opportunity and support the achievement of the MDGs. ACIAR aims to support gender equality and empower women, in line with the Australian Aid Program's statement on gender equality¹.

To achieve this ACIAR will:

- incorporate gender issues more strongly into project design, including developing a checklist, to ensure that projects target women in research activities and outcomes, and disaggregate the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of those activities by gender
- continue to promote the selection of teams that include both women and men in the design and implementation of projects
- use the expertise of appropriate organisations that work with families and women to disseminate research outcomes.

ACIAR also seeks to increase opportunities for greater gender equality in capacity-building exercises, including participation by women from developing countries and Australia in its projects. Annually, ACIAR supports such participation by conducting a 3-week international management development program on 'Leadership for Women in Asian Agriculture'. Approximately one-third of the current active scholarships in the postgraduate John Allwright Fellowship scheme are held by women, and applications from high-potential women researchers are actively solicited each year.

¹ AusAID. *Gender equality in Australia's aid program. 2007.* <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pubout.cfm?ID=39_3102_3439_6270_8533>