

Capacity building: education and training

Funding

	\$m
2008–09 actual	7.45
2009–10 budget allocation	6.08
2010–11 budget estimate	6.75

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. Work experience in joint research ventures also contributes to this objective.

ACIAR 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 eastern Indonesia (in conjunction with the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative).

Postgraduate training

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to partner-country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported collaborative research projects to undertake postgraduate training, usually at 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 110–120 scholars in the fellowship program in 2010–11.

In 2010–11 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 2010–11 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 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 50 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 56 fellowships since the program's inception in 2002, with 9 fellows taking part in the program in 2010.

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, the *Partners for Research in 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 Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (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.

Key performance indicators

- » At least 35 students successfully completed postgraduate awards in 2010–11 including 2 from East Timor
- » Management of the John Allwright Fellowship program effectively maintained following significant increase in number of postgraduate students
- » High quality of applicants for research management training programs in Australia continued, with at least eight John Dillon Fellowships awarded

Program management

A committee of senior staff under the chairmanship of ACIAR's Principal Adviser (Strategy and Policy), Dr Simon Hearn, provides guidance on training priorities and awards. Mrs Sharon Harvey is the contact point for John Allwright (postgraduate) and John Dillon (research management) fellowships.