

Message from the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary

The global food crisis is far from over, with prices for staple foods remaining high.

Australia's response includes humanitarian and development assistance together with scientific research to increase crop, fisheries, forestry and livestock production.

Australia is strongly committed to international cooperation through both regional and multilateral approaches to address global food security challenges, as well as working bilaterally with developing countries particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Australian Government has reaffirmed its commitment to scale up Australia's development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015–16.

The World Bank moved with great speed to establish its global food crisis response program. This program has provided more than US\$1 billion to meet urgent needs for welfare programs and for seeds and other agricultural supplies to help farmers increase production.

As part of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative in July 2008, governments and international organisations made an historic commitment to mobilise US\$20 billion in funding for food security over the next 3 years.

Australia pledged over \$460 million.

A key objective of this funding was to lift research to boost agricultural productivity.

With growing populations and declining availability of land, increasing agricultural productivity is vital.

The government also delivered a substantial funding increase for the Australian Centre for International

Agricultural Research (ACIAR), from around \$64 million in 2009–10 to more than \$87 million by 2012–13.

This money will be used in the interests of feeding the world's poor.

Internationally, Australian agricultural research is held in high regard—thanks to the work of organisations such as ACIAR.

Australia's agricultural research expertise is being mobilised to help developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa take action to address their development challenges.

These challenges include the effects of climate change, competition for inputs such as water, and pressure on available land. New farming systems and technologies are the basis for achieving the essential productivity gains to meet these challenges.

The government's food security policy, together with the increased emphasis in Australia and partner developing countries on climate change adaptation, is a central theme of this 2010–11 Annual Operational Plan.

In 2010–11 Australia will implement new initiatives designed over the past 12 months, including in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mekong, South Asia and the Pacific. This work will be implemented under the Centre's new management structure established in late 2009.

ACIAR's success in generating benefits for developing countries depends on bringing together the priorities of the partner countries and the capabilities of Australian researchers.

At both multilateral and bilateral levels these partnerships will be enhanced and expanded in 2010–11.



Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Bob McMullan MP
Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance

Preface

This Annual Operational Plan (AOP) 2010–11 presents ACIAR's planned research and development priorities and investments, corporate expenditures and key performance indicators for the year ahead. The AOP is aligned with the strategic directions contained in the ACIAR corporate plan covering the period 2008–12, and provides forward operational detail for implementation of the overarching corporate strategies. The AOP is therefore an essential accountability and management document, which is integrated into both the rural development strategy and the individual country and regional development strategies within the strategic framework of Australia's aid program.

During 2010–11 the AOP will comprise a mixture of maintaining and improving the momentum of previous and ongoing research programs and projects, while also providing for new initiatives and endeavours to meet the changing research and aid assistance challenges and aspirations of our developing-country partners and Australia.

In this context new initiatives to implement ACIAR's contribution to the Australian Government's Food Security through Rural Development policy statement are a central focus of ACIAR's future program, with an emphasis on research to raise productivity. There will be an overarching priority for sustainability in the context of increasing climatic variability and associated challenges in Australia and overseas. Important examples include:

- » the safeguarding of food security in rice-based farming systems of Mekong–South Asia
- » assistance with Mekong–South Asian crop and livestock responses to climate change
- » development of high-value agriculture, forestry and fishery products within the Pacific region



Dr Nick Austin
ACIAR Chief Executive Officer
June 2010

- » sustainable intensification of maize–legume cropping systems in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Both multilateral and bilateral partnerships in research remain as central tenets of ACIAR's activities. The reform of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), initiated in late 2008, has made considerable progress but more work remains to be done to progress its implementation in 2010–11. ACIAR and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) have actively participated in the reform deliberations and will continue to do so in 2010–11. The government has announced its intention to increase funding to the reformed CGIAR system. ACIAR, as the responsible agency, will actively work to ensure the effective utilisation of Australia's contributions to the new CGIAR system and its enhanced engagement in effective multilateral agricultural research initiatives for the benefit of developing countries.

At the bilateral level it remains important that ACIAR should contribute to the key research priorities of our partner countries and work in concert with the country strategies of the overall Australian aid program. The new ACIAR management structure outlined in this AOP is designed to give greater impetus to the regional and country aid directions, while retaining the essential interdisciplinary and participatory research management approaches in ACIAR. In 2010–11 ACIAR will also actively work with AusAID to enhance policy dialogue with development partners, and to translate research results into wider development outcomes.

If you need more information about any aspect of ACIAR's activities, please contact us. Details are in the corporate directory at the end of this report. Our website <www.aciar.gov.au> is also a key gateway to our operations.



Dr Meryl Williams
Chair, Commission for International Agricultural Research
June 2010